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The Task of Education in Global Times: An Inquiry into the Seventh National Curriculum in Korea

by

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ABSTRACT

As a curriculum research, this study focuses on meaning and perspective related to the present Korean public school curriculum. After a brief outline of the current situation of curriculum reform in Korea (Chapter I), a particular attention is paid to the two competing interpretations concerning the Seventh National Curriculum. The one holds the classical liberal position envisaged by John Locke, Adam Smith, and John Stuart Mill, with the view of defending the individual and market forces in the new curriculum (Chapter II). The social-democratic ideals of Karl Marx and John Dewey, on the other hand, upon which a critical meaning proceeds, reveal the capitalist and elitist cause of the Seventh National curriculum that finds its reason in the Darwinian environment of the twenty-first century global market (Chapter III). Once a proportional discussion of the dual meanings of contemporary national curriculum in Korea is made, the study moves toward a future-related meaning, perspective. Accordingly, a lengthy discussion is provided of a Confucian vision for the twenty-first century, especially in regard to education; while examining T'oegye's neo-Confucian philosophy and the classical Confucian text of the *Analects* (Chapters IV and V). At the core of this attempt is the assumption that the East Asian Confucian tradition relying on the humanistic way, rather

than the market measure, can be considered as an alternative to the dominant paradigm of our time—neo-liberal globalization.

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To Hyo-Eun and Jong-Jin

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Chapter I.

The Current Trend in Curriculum Reform in Korea

> The new administration will make efforts so that the young generations will be able to become main players in the knowledge and information society. Education reform is a core task that will solve a mountain of problems in our society today. I take this opportunity to firmly pledge that I will carry out educational reforms at all costs.
>
> (From Inaugural Address by the president Kim Dae-jung, February 25, 1998)

Korea's remarkable economic success in the past few decades has been largely due to the manufacturing-based model of production, whose labour-intensive products outsold their competitors in the world market. However, the changes in the marketplace engendered by technological advances and globalization have rendered labour-intensive manufacturing obsolete and have replaced it with a knowledge-intensive production model that stresses the application of knowledge and innovative approaches to dealing with issues and solving problems.

This shift toward a new production model has led to a fundamental reordering of Korean society since the late-1990s (particularly after the financial crisis of 1997) with the realization that the period of Korea blindly mimicking developed countries is over, and that Korea should now adopt a creative and independent problem-solving approach to meet her particular and unique needs. While a social, political, and economic

transformation is of immediate concern, there is also a series of changes in the education systems of Korea whose ultimate goal is to "help citizens equip themselves with the dispositions and ability that are of the highest equality by the global standard" (Kwak, 2002, page unknown). Aware that the quality of a nation's education and training system is seen to hold the key to future economic development, then, contemporary education reform in Korea serves a dual function—to prepare young people for the major changes in the global economy, and ensure the nation's survival and prosperity in a competitive global marketplace. The need for the reform of elementary and secondary school curriculum is evident in passages such as the following:

> Education reform is a global theme. Observing the rapid and marked changes in technology and international relations, among others, countries have come to realize that they can meet the challenges of the twenty-first century only by having their people in necessary to develop a sound education system which can generate human resources of competitive quality. Education reform is deemed indispensable (KMOE, 1997, Foreword).

This study presents the task of education in the twenty-first century global society, drawing attention to the effect of globalization on contemporary Korean school curriculum. Despite the fact that with the rise of the global economy small nation-states such as Korea need more market-oriented strategies for education and economic

development. However, there is another feature of the relationship between globalization and education which refers to various tensions, arising from the neo-liberal reform agenda—market criteria would make education more effective and efficient, and more accountable to the nation's response to the demands of global capitalism. In this sense, I argue that the Seventh National Curriculum poses several problem positions, characterized by a tension between the market and human interests, a tension between homocentric and eco-ethical perspectives. And, reckoning with David Smith's claim that "within these crises of identity lie conundrums especially relevant for curriculum studies," I call into question how a new kind of understanding emerges from the clash of tensions for the present Korean school curriculum (2002, p. 49).

A. The Research Question

The current trend of global integration based upon the radical free-market theory called neo-liberalism has led the Korean government to a way of educational reform responsible for achieving maximum national potential in the global marketplace. The problem lies in the fact that the world is now advancing from industrial societies, where tangible natural resources were the factors of economic development, into knowledge and information societies, where well educated/trained "human resources" will be the driving

force of economic development. Under such circumstances education is important because it should play a vital role in cultivating a creative and independent problem solving ability, which is a projected demand in the twenty-first century characterized by knowledge, information, and globalization. Derrick Cogburn nicely summarizes this new task of education:

> The globalization of economy and its concomitant demands on the workforce requires a different education that enhances the ability of learners to access, assess, adopt, and apply knowledge, to think independently to exercise appropriate judgment and to collaborate with others to make sense of new situations. The objective of education is no longer simply to convey a body of knowledge, but to teach how to learn, problem-solve and synthesize the old with the new (quoted from Bacchus, 2002, p. 13).

Reflecting on this, an attempt was made to revise the school curriculum in Korea. On December 30, 1997 the Korea Ministry of Education (KMOE) and Korea Institute of Curriculum and Evaluation (KICE) developed the Seventh National Curriculum, the primary goal of which is to produce the nation's creative and intellectual brain-power, which without global competition to ensure the salability of national product will not develop and the nation cannot but fall behind the rest of the world.[1] To achieve this goal,

[1] The Seventh National Curriculum was first implemented in 2000 at the primary first and second grade levels, and in 2004, was spread across all levels up to the senior year of high school. Some introductory materials concerning the new curriculum are available at Korea Ministry of Education (KMOE), http://www.moe.go.kr and Korea Institute of Curriculum and Evaluation (KICE), http://www.kice.re.kr

the new curriculum takes two approaches. First, it pursues a client-centred education that leads to the maximum development of individual potential, diversifying curricular options in response to the varied needs and abilities of individual learners. Second, it allows more autonomy to individual schools in curriculum formation and operation to improve the flexibility of the educational system.

The Seventh National Curriculum was then designed to produce an educated elite, capable of successful competition in the global market. And it is an audacious departure from the traditionally accepted monolithic, teacher-centred curriculum, in that it brings about a more individualized and autonomous school environment to make curriculum diversified and student-oriented. Also, the new curriculum is not out of step with the world in which we now live because of a well-educated human capital with creative, self-directed skills. It is, in the end, consistent with a small nation's survival and development strategy against the global expansion of a free market system.

Even so, this Seventh National Curriculum constitutes a prompt and hasty conclusion that the current effort to reshape school curriculum in order to meet the global standard is accompanied by the genuinely widespread reform impulse approaching a popular level. However, we should not forget that the above reform agenda contains in itself the causes of disagreement. That is, despite the fact that the Seventh National

Curriculum helps open up a state-controlled, rigid school system to mobilize local energies and resources in response to globalization, many have second thoughts about the new curriculum. At the outset, those in the line of objection speculate that the present market-oriented reform movement is educationally unsound and its social implications are unacceptable.[2] They feel it stands firmly on the side of realizing an elitist goal of education while enhancing the effectiveness of Korean education means for winning world market share. This may explain why the individualist and market tendencies in the current Korean school curriculum are not convincing to the public that the majority of students can derive benefits from the reform. Further, these critics argue that the new curriculum misleads people by stressing that education is basically the business of the individual and its goal is to increase economic utility both at individual and societal levels.

When seen in this light, it seems necessary to prepare a balanced account of the Seventh National Curriculum, providing some reasonable estimate of the potential promises and limits made by current Korean school curriculum. On this consideration,

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[2] The main objection has come from the Korean Teachers and Educational Workers' Union (KTU) which has waged a campaign to oppose the neo-liberal economic trend of the present Korean school curriculum. According to a recent media report, "a total of 1592 [unionized] teachers from 114 schools nationwide have joined the campaign to block" the implementation of a flexible level differentiated curriculum that is the key of the Seventh National Curriculum (Chung, 2005, p. 1). The KTU has vowed to take strong action against a government plan to address the individual market way to the classroom, arguing that the free market principle applied to education will cater to privileged students and thereby worsen the educational

the first task of this study is to examine both the characteristic strengths and weaknesses of the Seventh National Curriculum in order to create a harmonious picture in which the lights and shades fall in just proportion and thus form the whole. To that end, I will first present the individual and market elements in the new curriculum upon a background of the classical liberal tradition of John Locke, Adam Smith, and John Stuart Mill. I will do this by focusing on a unified reading of those three great liberal thinkers which is essentially a philosophical attempt to place the present Korean school curriculum in the neo-liberal global context, as seen from the traditional liberal perspective.[3] After this, I will address the social-democratic tradition of Karl Marx and John Dewey with the view of exposing the incapacity of the Seventh National Curriculum to respond to the communal values of life and education. At issue here is how Marx's view of alienation and Dewey's vision of school democracy attest to a tension that arose within the new curriculum when its atomistic values collided with communitarian values.

All told, however, due to the fact that when there is significant change not all follow

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inequality among students.

[3] Of course, it would be unrealistic to expect a perfect correspondence between classical liberalism and neo-liberalism. But, if we accept the supposition that neo-liberalism, as opposed to new liberalism, modern liberalism, or state liberalism should find its direct root in the liberal-capitalist enlightenment project, neo-liberalism is nothing less than the re-emergence of classical liberalism, which Damico (1978) identifies with "the liberalism of constitutionalism (John Locke), the negative state and individualism (John Stuart Mill), and in political economy, *laissez-faire* (Adam Smith)" (p. 68). It is in this context that I take up the issue of how the individual-market frameworks of Locke, Smith, and Mill endorse the neo-liberal, economic values within the Seventh National Curriculum.

the mainstream reform measures which are often confronted by critics, we are not unnaturally given an opportunity to ponder over new perspective. In the present case, I recognize that between the liberal and socialist interpretations of the Seventh National Curriculum a cultural space exists where I can discuss a Confucian response to the neo-liberalist worldview, whose individualistic, rational, and homocentric logic gets its influence on the shaping of contemporary Korean school curriculum. Whereas the stress is laid on the philosophical meaning of new curriculum special attention in the remainder of the study will be directed to the Confucian vision for the twenty-first century. The first attempt in this light is to understand T'oegye's neo-Confucian thought and its contributions to curricular thinking. It is followed by a general discussion of Confucian philosophy whose ontological question of interconnectedness and moral ideal of 'polite' society could offer a counter argument of the neo-liberalist model of education.

As might be expected, then, there are two main questions in this study: The one is to explore the tension between neo-liberal economic values and social democratic values implicit in the Seventh National Curriculum. Needless to say, this is intended to render service in our understanding of the present Korean school curriculum. The other is to develop an alternate vision around the Confucian way of life. I discuss the Confucian perspective as a response to today's quest for a paradigm shift in what some might call an

alternative post-human condition.

The assumptions underlying this study are (1) that current curriculum reform in Korea is mainly driven by neo-liberal globalization (i.e., the global expansion of a free market economy); (2) that two modernist projects, namely the Liberal Enlightenment Project and the Social Democratic Project, can provide two competing standpoints from which I explore the philosophical meaning of the Seventh National Curriculum; and (3) that a study of East Asian Confucian tradition may help enlarge our cultural horizon so that we can create a new possibility for the post-modernist/capitalist era.

This study is comprised of five chapters. This opening chapter is an attempt to articulate the research question and some basic premises, while investigating the current trend of curriculum reform in Korea.

Chapters II and III will be guided by the question: 'What are the bright and dark sides of contemporary Korean school curriculum?' First, in Chapter II, I will examine the individual and market forces in the Seventh National Curriculum concentrating on the three classical liberal thinkers: John Locke, Adam Smith, and John Stuart Mill. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a liberal-type defence of the new curriculum while traversing the catalogue of the strengths of the present Korean school curriculum.

Whereas Chapter II is an attempt to justify the Seventh National Curriculum,

Chapter III includes two critical arguments. In the first half, I will draw attention to Karl Marx's concept of alienation and apply it to the problem of social separation in the neo-classical classroom. In the second half, I will explore John Dewey's democratic philosophy and its implications to education. The main task undertaken in this chapter, then, is to give a social-democratic critique of new curriculum whose liberal-individualist, market stance makes it difficult to see the social aim of school education.

After the exploration of the philosophical meaning of the Seventh National Curriculum, I will proceed to consider Confucian vision for the twenty-first century. The importance of this section lies in the assumption that Confucianism as "humanistic" philosophy can offer a new humanistic way against a neo-liberalist market way. The discussion will begin with the neo-Confucian philosophy of T'oegye, who is the best Confucian mind Korea has produced and, at the same time, whose historical position in the development of East Asian Confucian tradition has not been challenged. In Chapter IV, therefore, particular attention shall be paid to T'oegye's Confucian project and its possible implications to curricular thinking today.

In Chapter V, I continue to discuss the contemporary meaning of Confucian tradition, but here I propose to return to the classical Confucian teaching with focus on the *Analects*. Classical Confucian way to cultivate human relation and establish the unity

with nature will be discussed in this regard. In so doing, I shall be given an opportunity to find Confucian pedagogy—an alternative to the neo-liberalist model of education.

B. The Seventh National Curriculum: An Overview[4]

Given that reform is an intentional attempt to "change system in a better direction" or "improve the system," the obvious question is this: Why is curriculum reform being considered as a necessary option in today's Korean context? To respond, we should be reminded of the two well-rooted educational problems, which call an urgent need for the restructuring of the present Korean school system to meet the new tasks spawned in the era of globalization.

The first problem is the charge that the traditionally accepted college entrance exam-oriented education system which is still in place today has produced standardized persons who lack individuality and creativity. The following quotation from PCER report shows how such an educational system that represses the natural curiosity and inquiring minds of the students will be irrelevant for the twenty-first knowledge and information society:

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[4] The main literature on contemporary curriculum reform in Korea I dealt with is the Presidential Commission on Education Reform (PCER) proposals in four separate reports (1995-1997). For this, see KMOE, 1997; KMOE, 1998. The one is an English translation of PCER report including the four reform proposals. The other is a revised English summary of the PCER reform measures.

> Due to the high expectations of their parents, Korean children are trapped in the so-called 'examination hell' And although Korean students study a plethora of subjects in school, the lack of optional choices seriously curtails their freedom to think. Hence, it is almost impossible for the students to nurture individuality and creativity (KMOE, 1997, I, 2, B).

In this circumstance, Korean students are given little opportunity to develop their diverse and individual potential, while being trapped in the so-called 'examination hell.' This allows us to make the point that the conventional school system characterized by cramming, rote memorization of simple knowledge, and standardized examination cannot effectively respond to the challenges posed by the twenty-first century information, knowledge, and globalization society where the first priority of school education lies in cultivating creative, self-driven human resources capable of sharpening the nation's competitive edge in the global market.

The second problem is that the strict regulation of educational administration results in waste and inefficiency in school operations. To put it in another way, the quality of school education in Korea has been undermined by the uniform standards imposed by the central government. So, under the present situation local schools fail to provide diverse educational programs needed to foster creativity and to meet the individual needs of the students. Conversely, for the efficient management of the school the autonomy of each school should be increased so that it can build up an open system flexible to the demands

of the educational consumers—students and parents. Implicit in this market-favoured change is the assumption that free competition among individual institutions relying on the principle of autonomy and responsibility is the best way to improve the quality of education and assure the maximum development of each student's different capabilities and aptitude.

To solve the above-mentioned problems, the Korean government has sought to introduce a student-centred curriculum and a streamed/level-differentiated curriculum with the result of institutionalizing individualism in the school. By the same token, efforts have been made to grant schools more freedom in determining and defining their curriculum as they offer programs that reflect the needs of the local community and students. The Seventh National Curriculum, a newly updated school curriculum, is the result.

Under the slogan E*ducation that highly respects the individuality, ability, aptitude, and interest of each person*, the recently revised Korean school curriculum engages seriously with the question of how curricula are diversified and specialized so as to give individual students a wide variety and choice of programs. It is a significant break from the existing top-down system that enforces conformity to a standard program, for it throws out the monolithic curriculum dictated in the interests of the expediency of those

providing education. This can be achieved in two ways (See KMOE, 1997, II, 2, A): The first, by decreasing the required subjects to increase the number of elective courses from the first year of primary school through the first year of high school. In line with this, the basic common education curriculum spanning grades one through ten contains extra-curricular activities and discretionary hours, as well as compulsory subjects. The point at issue is the optimum balance of the necessary basic education and the diversity of programs for the first ten years of school education. The second, by addressing optional courses in order to make various types of individual study programs available for the senior students in high school. For this, steps are made in the second and third year of high school education to differentiate curriculum in consideration of each student's ability, interests, and career choices. During the eleventh and twelfth grades, therefore, students are given the freedom to define their curriculum and choose the courses they wish to take up in fifty percent of the total school hours; whereas about thirty percent will be set and designated elective by the Municipal or Provincial Education Offices and the remaining twenty percent can be determined by the individual school. This is an ambitious and bold renovation of curriculum for the second- and third-year students in high school whose goal is to expand an individual student's choice right in education.

In addition to greater scope in program choices fit for each student's interest and

aptitude, the Seventh National Curriculum takes into account the variation of programs between levels (See KMOE, 1997, II, 2, B). The fact that every student has different academic abilities and needs is what lies behind the request to set up a streamed or individualized curriculum. To provide a systematic streamed educational process, contemporary Korean schools form and operate three types of level-differentiated curriculum. The first is the level-oriented streamed curriculum that helps individual students to learn at their own pace. The core subjects, such as mathematics and English, in this light break down different levels in one grade to meet with different levels of learner competence: For instance, mathematics courses can be divided into 10 levels and English into four levels. This means, then, that at the same school students of the same grade may study different levels of a subject according to their competency as determined by their academic accomplishments. As such, students of the same academic band can study in a class, or move from one class to another. This compares favourably with the previous curriculum in which little consideration was given to the unique needs and abilities of individual students. The second is the in-depth supplementary streamed curriculum. During the national common basic education period, in such subjects as Korean language, social science, and science study, contents are basically organized for mid-level students. But in-depth study contents for advanced students are also included in

this kind of streamed curricula. All the same, supplementary educational contents are prepared for students who fall far behind in their studies. These three-level study contents are then designed to encourage individual-paced learning that allows individual students to develop their latent power at varying, unique speeds. The last form of streamed curriculum is the elective-oriented curriculum, which is applied to the second and third years of high school. As we have seen, it presents various course options with a view to best suit the future career plan and competency level of individual learners. In drawing up the curriculum for each student, the elective curriculum system is recommended on the ground that it can contribute to the development of the diverse potential of individuals, making education more learner-oriented.

A closely-related change in the Seventh National Curriculum is enlarged school autonomy for curriculum management. Traditionally, Korea has sustained a state-controlled standardization curriculum. Since the mid-1990s, however, the Korean government has sought to move away from such a rigid, centralized education system to a more decentralized, sensitive approach to education. The underlying assumption is that local-level operations in education would be more effective in addressing local needs, managing resources, and improving education. In this respect, the new curriculum intends to promote the autonomy of individual schools to organize diverse programs that are

responsive to the unique needs of local communities. Given the circumstances, as commonly claimed, the Seventh National Curriculum is said to set a new benchmark in the localization of education in Korea in the sense that it has given more freedom or independence to schools at regional and local levels for efficient school operations. In other words, the current national curriculum in Korea is decentralized in the sense that the central government's monopoly on curriculum formation and operation is ended and each can now enjoy greater latitude of discretion in administrative affairs, and choosing its curricula depending on the given conditions of the school and local community. Yet, it is still worth noting that this change must not be interpreted as a full, radical decentralization of school curriculum. For, apart from the fact that individual schools are given more autonomy in the curricular management for local convenience, the central government ironically tends to tighten its grip on school curriculum through the national textbooks and evaluation procedures on the national scale. One reason is that the government's administrative and financial support for local schools that is linked to external school evaluation conducted on a regular basis can help upgrade effectiveness and quality in education while spurring competition among individual schools. Within this framework, it might be safe to say that contemporary Korean school curriculum remains centralized but only allows some modifications to reward and encourage local

participation in the curriculum decision-making process.

To summarize, starting from the kind of crisis awareness that the existing spoon-fed, supply-oriented curriculum cannot produce creative, independent human resources competitive in the twenty-first century global market society, a series of profound changes are addressed to reconstruct curriculum as self-directed and consumer-oriented. To enhance an individual's self-directed learning, first of all, the new curriculum prefers an individualized teaching and learning method in education. This is why it implements a flexible level-differentiated curriculum for the major subject areas at various times during the elementary and secondary school years, while encouraging individual students to take a leading initiative in their studies for the cultivation of self-directed capacities. Meanwhile, moving toward a more decentralized/localized curriculum, current Korean school curriculum would place a greater emphasis on diverse educational programs to allow individual students to choose from various specialized courses according to their aptitude, ability or future career plan. The bottom line is that each student is able to study what is relevant to his/her individual needs and competencies so as to maximize the unique growth potential and creativity in thinking. Ideally, schools are privatized on the principle of competition and to that extent consumers (i.e., parents) are given a broader choice option in the educational marketplace, which is manifest in the following

passages:

> Schools are allowed to seek excellence based on autonomy and competition. . . . Students and parents are free to choose the educational programs that best suit the students' aptitudes and interests on the basis of given information (KMOE, 1997, I, D, 3).
> Schools must be given a greater degree of autonomy to allow them to take steps towards self-improvement. The educational reform enables each school to preside over planning for self-directed growth and take responsibility for the results of this planning (KMOE, 1998, II, 1, F).

In short, diversification and deregulation for the free, full pursuit of individual goals in education are the main features of the Seventh National Curriculum. And, it is a new level of achievement in improving the market quality of education, for it uses the rapid, enormous changes affiliated with globalization as an opportunity to reform the ineffective and inefficient school system in Korea.

In these opening pages I have provided orientation to the study, while describing the present situation of curriculum reform in Korea. To investigate the philosophical reasons out of which the Seventh National Curriculum emerged is the next task, which gives rise to defence of the new curriculum.

Chapter II.

The Classical Liberal Interpretation of the Seventh National Curriculum

In 1947, a group of people who "depicted themselves 'liberals' because of their fundamental commitment to ideals of personal freedom" had gathered together to create 'The Pelerin Society' (Harvey, 2005, pp. 20-21). As a founding member of that society, Friedrich von Hayek is rightly considered by many to be the father of today's dominant free-market ideology called neo-liberalism. Against both totalitarianism and new liberalism (i.e., state liberalism), the renowned Austrian liberal philosopher undertook to redefine the rules of the government over the people. Hayek developed this by reviving and adhering to the classical liberal positions such as support for a conception of freedom and respect for the capacities and the agency of individual person. In this light, we find Hayek embracing a similar view to that espoused by the traditional liberal philosophers on the relationship between the state and the individual:

> [T]he individualist concludes that the individualist should be allowed, within defined limits, to follow their own values and preferences rather than somebody else's; that within these spheres the individual's system of ends should be supreme and not subject to any dictation by others. It is this recognition of the individual as the ultimate judge of his ends, the belief that as far as possible his own views ought to govern his actions, that forms the essence of the individualist position (Hayek, 1944, p. 59).

Hayekian liberalism (or neo-liberalism, as a revived form of liberalism) was adopted and fostered by Milton Friedman and his Chicago School economists. Like his mentor Hayek, Friedman drew attention to "the role that government should play in a society dedicated to freedom and relying primarily on the market to organize economic activity" (Friedman, 1962, p. 4). Recognizing the dangers of an over-governed society, Friedman asserted that the government's intervention in a free market is a great threat to a system of economic freedom, which is, he believed, a necessary condition for human freedom (Friedman, 1962; 1980). For Friedman, then, the proper role of the government is to advance the cause of freedom by driving the country's political and economic policies towards *laissez-faire*. Again, here is the classical liberal question of the sovereignty of the individual, with a state that is limited.

Classical liberalism as the original form of, and is today a tendency within, liberalism has three distinguishing features from all others that form of societal order: First, individual freedom; second, economic freedom; and finally, limited representative government. Beginning with John Locke's legal and philosophical case for political freedom in the seventeenth century, the classical liberal tradition evolved through Adam Smith's defence of economic freedom in the eighteenth century. With his essay *On Liberty* (1859) John Stuart Mill endorsed the traditional liberal view of the minimal state

in the nineteenth century.[5]

Against this background, I have good reason for claiming that neo-liberalism represents an updated version of classical liberalism and, further, that neo-liberalism can be constructed through the classical liberal philosophy which places a great stress on the ideal of individuality and the free market way. (Re)conceptualizing neo-liberalism as the re-emergence of classical liberalism, then, it would be reasonable to suggest that in restating and fortifying the liberal-individualist market trend of the present Korean school curriculum the philosophy/philosophies of Locke, Smith, and Mill, who are the three key figures in the history of liberalism, is a suitable place to start my inquiry. Hence, I shall have opportunity in the course of this chapter to show how the neo-liberal reform agenda used by curriculum makers in Korea is described and justified by a combination of Locke's theory of natural rights, Smith's account of the self-correcting mechanism of the free market, and Mill's advocacy of personal liberty and individuality.

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[5] In essence, classical liberals include such notable twentieth century thinkers as von Mises, Hayek, and Milton Freidman. And, as Conway (1995) argues, it is these neo-liberal thinkers who rescue or revive classical liberalism from oblivion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (p. 9). But the term classical liberalism itself is the creation of the twentieth century to avoid confusion with modern liberalism

A. John Locke on the Importance of Individual Difference and Freedom in Education

Locke's educational philosophy has been presented and assessed in terms of certain conclusions drawn from his general theory of human nature. In Locke's opinion, humans are by nature free and rational, and hence capable of guiding their conduct and opinions in their own best and ultimate interests. In addition, Locke's epistemology of the differences of endowments had conceived every individual as a human being who has a unique 'property' to develop. Seen in this light, Locke's attempt to adjust education to the child's individual capacity and inclination constitutes an important part of his contribution to educational theory and practice. And, it is Locke's belief in the power of freedom associated with the power of reason, and his full recognition of different individual qualifications in the process of education that can shed light upon the principle of individualism characteristic of the Seventh National Curriculum.

The most significant change in the Seventh National Curriculum, as compared with previous curricular reforms, is that it recognizes individual differences in education while pursuing a student-centred education. In this respect, the new curriculum implements academic labeling or ability grouping for the five major subject-matters: Korean language,

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and for that reason the phrase is mainly used as a description of pre-1850 liberalism.

English, mathematics, science, and social science (grade one to ten). Apart from the fact that curriculum is differentiated on the basis of each learner's academic accomplishment, the concept of the elective-course program is also introduced so that students can choose courses they want to take according to their individual needs (grades eleven and twelve). As a client-centred curriculum, then, the contemporary Korean school curriculum stresses the unique capacity, interest, and career goal of the individual student.

The same view appears in Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693). For Locke, as for other contemporary thinkers, the seventeenth century was an era when the complex intellectual changes took place in science, religious, politics, philosophy, and education (Yolton, 1971). And, as one of the most important figures of the seventeenth century, Locke deserved credit for typifying the general characteristics of the period. In the subject of education, for example, the growth of developmental psychology and the new scientific method stressing experience and observation were profoundly affecting Locke's critical views of traditional scholastic learning. A result was that Locke intended to fit "the education program to the child, not the child to the program" while taking into account "the individual child, his natural and acquired talents, his weakness and dislikes" (Axtell, 1968, pp. 52-53). One of the most concise statements of Locke's recognition of the individual differences in education and his skeptical disregard of general educational

theories and rules come at the end of his essay on education:

> [O]ne should take in the various tempers, different inclinations, and particular defaults that are to be found in children and prescribe proper remedies. The variety is so great that it would require a volume; nor would that reach it. Each man's mind has some peculiarity, as well as his face, that distinguishes him from all others; there are possibly scarce two children who can be conducted by exactly the same method (Locke, 1996a/1693, p. 161).

What matters in education is, then, to be "adapted to his capacity and anyway suited to the child's natural genius and constitution" (Locke, 1996a, p. 41), because, as Lepzien (1896) hints, a right education "must interest them [children], respect individuality, and consider the innate nature" (p. 42). To paraphrase Locke, "the most effective approach to education is . . . but through a careful study of individual persons. . . . only by fitting our techniques to the particular talents and potentialities of each individual" (Yolton, 1971, p. 91).

The theme of the innate differences of human nature is also considered in *Of the Conduct of the Understanding* (1697), which is Locke's last philosophical writing. In section 2, for example, he contended that "[t]here is, it is visible, great variety in men's understandings, and their natural constitutions put so wide a difference between . . . men" (Locke, 1996a, p. 168). In this light "Locke want[ed] to adjust the education-instruction

to the faculties or personal qualifications of each individual" (Sjöstrand, 1973, p. 33) because "[t]he mind by being engaged in a task beyond its strength, like the body strained by lifting at a weight too heavy, has often its force broken, and thereby gets an inaptness" (Locke, 1996a, p. 203).

Expressed differently, "Locke had drawn attention to the child's individual temper and its significance in the educational process" on the ground that "every individual had been blessed with a particular natural temper which the hopeful educator should discover if his [sic] effects were to produce their happiest results" (Brown, 1952, pp. 157, 166). What happens in this case is that Locke was in favour of the tutoring system in which the natural genius and temper in children should be carefully studied so that instruction can fit the "favorable seasons of aptitude and inclination" (Locke, 1996a, pp. 51-52). One indication of the importance placed on "constant attention and particular application to every single boy" (Locke, 1996a, p. 48) is that "he that [who] is about children should well study their natures and aptitudes," for, as Erdbrügger (1912) argues well, "only when the teacher knows the nature of his children fully and completely, he can find the right way which grants them the necessary liberty, joy, and pleasure" (p. 57). Locke continues to say:

> [The master] should . . . see, by often trials, what turn they [children] easily take and what becomes them, observe what their native stock is, how it may be improved, and what it is fit for; he should consider what they want, whether they be capable of having it wrought into them by industry and incorporated there by practice, and whether it be worthwhile to endeavor it. For in many cases, all that we can do or should aim at is to make the best of what nature has given, to prevent the vices and faults to which such a constitution is most inclined, and give it all the advantages it is capable of. Everyone's natural genius should be carried as far as it could, but to attempt the putting another upon him will be but labor in vain (Locke, 1996a, p. 41).

Locke's individualist view of education which lays a stress on the natural differences of each individual seems to have its origin in his medical study. Although the fact that Locke was a medical man is not well known, as Dewhurst (1963) strongly proves, he was an ardent medical student at Oxford and his medical interest was "probably the most pervasive and long-lasting" (Yolton, 1993, pp. 135-136). The direct impact of Locke's medical training on his educational thought is that he saw "the pupil as a physician does his patient, that is, as someone to be treated as an individual in the light of his [sic] particular condition and temperament" (Sahakian & Sahakian, 1975, p. 120). Therefore, Boyd (1914) maintains that "Locke, fortunate in combining the experience of a physician with that of a teacher, hit on the truth, almost by accident, that there can be no true education which does not adapt itself to the nature of the learner" (p. 27).

Meanwhile, Locke's individualist approach to education was opposed alike to

dogmatic tradition and authority, for, as noted, he argued against the old, dogmatic view that "education is a more or less uniform process in which the same subjects taught in the same way would produce the same cultural effect" (Boyd, 1914, p. 26). Aside from the influence of his medical career, then, Locke's attack on universal specifics in education has its roots deep in his liberal thinking, the core of which is to supply a philosophical justification for individual resistance to the arbitrary domination of absolute authority. Hence, in his *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689), for example, Locke wished to present a case against intellectual dogmatism while making individual experience as the central theme of epistemological thought. Also, in *Two Treatises of Government* (1690) Locke manifestly "appears as a champion of individual freedom against the claims of the authoritarian state" (Jolley, 1999, p. 194). Further, Locke's plea for individual liberty for the salvation of souls in *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689) was in accord with the liberal-individualist spirit of his age (See Gough, 1948). Now, it is easy to suppose that in Locke's case the principle of individualism is a single conception of his liberal system of thought that would blend his epistemological, political, ecclesiastical, medical, and educational aspects to a "unity, within which the stated points of view would not be in striking contrast to each other" (Sjöstrand, 1973, p. 33).

Locke's view of the individual child as the main concern of education, then, must

be understood in the light of his theory of freedom. In *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Locke made a statement about human liberty, saying that

> The idea of liberty is the idea of a power in any agent to do or forbear any particular action according to the determination or thought of the mind. . . . So that liberty is not an idea belonging to volition, or preferring, but to the person having the power of doing, or forbearing to do according as the mind shall chuse [choose] or direct. Our idea of liberty reaches as far as that power, and no farther (Locke, 2000/1689, pp. 83-84).

Here, Locke talks of reasonable self-restraint while defining liberty as "a power to act or not to act according to the mind direct" (Locke, 2000, p. 96). In other words, liberty is nothing but "a power to suspend the prosecution of this or that desire, as every one daily may experiment in himself," and "stop them [desires] from determining [one's] wills to any action, till [one] have duly and fairly examin'd [examined] the good and evil of it, as far forth as the weight of the thing requires" (Locke, 2000, pp. 92-93). This is why Leyden (1981) calls Locke's freedom "moral freedom" (p. 58) and the reason why Polin (1969) proclaims that "Locke does not hesitate to present the power of freedom as associated with the power of reason" (p. 3).

For Locke, then, freedom is not "[a] liberty for every man to do what he lists, to live as he pleases" (Locke, 1996b/1690, p. 284). Rather, according to Locke, "to be free is to

think and act according to one's own judgment" (Polin, 1969, p. 2), since freedom acquires meaning only when it is related to the rationalist claim that "every man is put under a necessity by his constitution, as an intelligent being, to be determined in willing by his own thought and judgment, what is best for him to do" (Locke, 2000, p. 92).

Locke's concept of freedom as an agent's freedom capable of reason introduces him to a 'new' kind of education in which the individual child should be treated as "a rational agent in command of his [sic] wants and desires, seeking always to act virtuously" (Yolton, 1971, p. 23). Therefore Locke said:

> Children have as much a mind to show that they are free, that their own good actions come from themselves, that they are absolute and independent, as any of the proudest of you grown men, think them as you please. As a consequence of this, they should seldom be put about doing even those things you have got an inclination in them to but when they have a mind and disposition to it (Locke, 1996a, p. 51).

Locke, then, invites us to the potential benefit of this method of liberty, which can be summarized as follows:

> By this means a great deal of time and tiring would be saved. For a child will learn three times as much when he is in tune as he will with double the time and pains when he goes awkwardly or is dragged unwillingly to it. If this were minded as it should, children might be permitted to weary themselves with play and yet have time enough to learn what is suited to the capacity of each age (Locke, 1996a, p. 52)

This Lockean method based on liberty has a further advantage. Boyd (1914) explains:

> [T]he teacher gets the opportunity of knowing his pupil's character thoroughly and is able to deal with him in the way best suited to his case . . . [because] by careful observation of the boy when he is left free to follow his own bent and he supposes himself not to be under supervision he will reveal his true character (p. 29).

Locke confirmed himself this advantage, when he maintained that "a free liberty permitted them [children] in their recreations, that it will discover their natural tempers, show their inclinations and aptitudes, and thereby direct wise parents in the choice" (Locke, 1996a, p. 80). After all, as Brown (1952) notes, "Locke in his discussion stressed the necessity for observing children's natural inclinations," and he knew that "this could best be done by granting them a free liberty" (p. 166). In brief, Locke's individualist view of education may have been indebted to his strong attachment to the clinical medicine of his age, which emphasized the variations of individuality. But it is not at all unlikely that Locke's individualist position was, in significant measure, due to his liberal claim that humans are "born free" and "born rational" (Locke, 1996b, p. 308). The result is that Locke was dissatisfied with "the wholesale methods" of education, which had become stereotyped in the educational institutions since the Renaissance (Boyd, 1914, p. 27), and

at the same time contended that "education can only be properly carried on when the boy is dealt with as an individual" (Boyd, 1928, p. 291).

B. John Locke's Relevance for the Seventh National Curriculum

Locke's maxim that education is primarily an individual matter has in it several implications for the present school curriculum in Korea. First, it is important to note that Locke's belief in the existence of innate differences of human nature helps us understand the philosophical base of a differentiated curriculum which emphasizes natural differences as regards both endowments and temper. Second, it seems evident that a student-centred education oriented by the new curriculum can be justified by the Lockean contention that the individuals "should be treated as rational creatures" (Curtis & Boultwood, 1963, p. 241) who must be given the liberty to direct themselves and seek for "free self-realization" (Sjöstrand, 1973, p. 34). Finally, it can be asserted that the Seventh National Curriculum focusing on the diversification of curricular options is an educational resistance to the dogmatic authority of the monolithic curriculum, which has been the case in Korea since the first appearance of a national school curriculum in 1955.

Locke believed in freedom. And, associated with this human "power inherent in individuals, belong[ing] to individuals only, not to groups" is the emergence of a new

theory of education which regards a free liberty as the vital condition of a true education (Salvadori, 1960, p. XXXI). Within this individualist framework, highlighting Locke's unique contribution to educational theory, McCallister (1931) correctly credits him with developing the liberal thesis that "freedom is the great secret of education" (p. 188). Despite Locke's reputation as the originator of classical liberalism, however, it took about a half-century for an even more celebrated proponent of liberty to come into the stage of history, in the person of Adam Smith and his famous doctrine of *laissez-faire*. In the following section, therefore, I shall examine the roots of the individualist orientation in the present Korean school curriculum that can be gleaned from the renowned Scottish thinker who continues to enjoy his fame among contemporary political economists, moral philosophers, and educational reformers.

C. Adam Smith: Human Capital, *Laissez-Faire*, and Education

If Locke based his educational doctrines upon the liberal presumption that human beings are free and rational self-seeking agents, Smith's *laissez-faire* philosophy of education had represented his liberal-individualist view of human nature. According to Smith, humans are essentially self-interested who address themselves to their own advantages in the best possible way. Since Smith saw self-love as central to an

understanding of human nature, Smith's primary concern in education was to ensure the free pursuit of self-interest. For this purpose, Smith proposed to apply the free-market principle to education, highlighting the advantage of competitive individualism in education. It is not surprising, then, that like Locke, Smith conceived the idea of the freedom and interest of the individual as the starting point of his educational thought aimed at re-shaping the dominant educational practices of his time. And, it will be observed that Smith's natural system of liberty was strikingly similar to Locke's liberty method in reaffirming the benefit of freedom in education. However, Smith's contribution to the field of education was not only that he placed the emphasis upon the utility of liberty, but that he also pointed out that economic progress is connected with education. What is particularly relevant here is the concept of human capital theory, and Smith's endorsement of the development and use of human capital as of other resources will provide a doctrinaire advocate for the Seventh National Curriculum, whose ultimate goal is to produce well educated human resources and ensure the nation's economic success in the global marketplace.

As Halsey *et al.* (1997) argue, with the appearance of the global economy "there is a new international consensus which recognizes education to be of even greater importance than in the past to the future of individual and national economic prosperity"

(p. 7). The reason is that in a society of information and globalization the potential wealth of nations depends on "the upgrading of the quality of human resources" (Brown & Lauder, 1999, p. 180). Driven by this economic perspective, the Seventh National Curriculum in Korea aims to produce creative and productive human powers which are competitive in a global market. In the meantime, the New Right contends that under the 'real' world of global capitalism the route to salvation is only through 'the survival of the fittest,' that is, through the extension of the market ideology of competitive individualism. In this Darwinian context, the new Korean school curriculum seeks to maximize or utilize the free pursuit of self-interest in education, along with the market principle of competition and choice.

The same issues arise as to Smith's ideas concerning education. The thesis is that the concept of education as investment in human beings must have been attractive to the author of *The Wealth of Nations* (1776). An obvious starting point in this light is provided by the account Smith gave in Book II of the fourth part of the fixed capital:

> Fourthly, of the acquired and useful abilities of all the inhabitants or members of the society. The acquisition of such talents, by the maintenance of the acquirer during his education, study, or apprenticeship, always costs a real expense, which is a capital fixed and realized, as it were, in his person. Those talents, as they make a part of his fortune, so do they likewise of that of the society to which he belongs. The improved dexterity of a workman may be considered in the same light as a machine or instrument of trade which facilitates and

> abridges labor, and which, though it costs a certain expense, repays that expense with a profit (Smith, 1937/1776, pp. 265-266).

In this much-publicized paragraph, Smith brought up the point that educational expenditure is a form of investment which is "motivated by the expected rate of return" (Schultz, 1992, p. 130). And this utility argument prompted him to conclude that education or training is "a form of human capital accumulation, a profitable investment both for the individuals concerned and society as a whole" (Tu, 1969, p. 691). Woodhall (1987) explains the reason:

> The individual who takes part in education or vocational training benefits by increasing his or her chances of employment and by increased lifetime earnings. . . . [E]ducation also affect[s] society as a whole, since society benefits from the increased productivity of educated workers (p. 22).

Smith's continuing concern with what is now often referred to as human capital theory can be gauged from his attempt to draw an analogy between investment in physical capital and investment in human capital. That is, he believed that as a profitable form of capital "the reward of human capital must reflect the investment embodied in it even as does the return on other fixed capital" (Spengler, 1977, p. 33). His comparison of a better-educated or trained person to a precious machine is well-known:

> When any expensive machine is erected, the extraordinary work to be performed by it before it is worn out, it must be expected, will replace the capital laid out upon it, with at least the ordinary profits. A man educated at the expense of much labor and time to any of those employments which require extraordinary dexterity and skill, may be compared to one of those expensive machines. The work which he learns to perform, it must be expected, over and above the usual wages of common labor, will replace to him the whole expense of his education, with at least the ordinary profits of an equally valuable capital. It must do this too in a reasonable time, regard being had to the very uncertain duration of human life, in the same manner as to the more certain duration of the machine (Smith, 1937, p. 101).

Although Smith was not the first person to advance this kind of human capital concept, the idea that education is an investment based on the rate of return is commonly associated with him (Dankert, 1974). In addition, Smith, like other classical economists, was interested in proving the claim that investment in human capital produces benefits both to the individual and to society.

Nonetheless, Smith's chief fame as an educational thinker depends upon a remarkable chapter in *The Wealth of Nations* (chapter 1 in Book V), where he "advance[s] a variety of suggestions aimed at educational reform" (Dankert, 1974, p. 158). Smith begins his discussion by criticizing the educational arrangements of his day. In particular, his opposition to the endowment system is notable because he thinks that the endowments of schools and colleges had failed to "promote the end of their institution," to "encourage the diligence," to "improve the abilities of the teachers," and to "direct the

course of education towards objects more useful, both to the individual and to the public, than those to which it would naturally have gone of its own accord" (Smith, 1937, p. 716).

The view that the endowments of schools and colleges had rendered educational institutions inefficient and much of their teaching irrelevant was deeply influenced by his direct experience of the English endowed institutions.[6] His comment that "[i]n the University of Oxford, the greater part of the public professors have, for these many years, given up altogether even the pretence of teaching" was a fine bit of testimony in support of the contention that "in some of the richest and best endowed institutions teachers commonly teach very negligently and superficially" (Smith, 1937, pp. 718, 727).

Another source of Smith's disapproval of the endowment system was his humble estimate of human nature—"diligence is likely to be proportioned to the motives which he has for exerting it" (Smith, 1937, p. 718). He thus, as Dankert (1974, p. 158) aptly notes, made the point that there "should be a very close connection between effort and reward":

> In every profession, the exertion of the greater part of those who exercise it, is always in proportion to the necessity they are under of making that exertion. This necessity is greatest with those to whom the emoluments of their profession are the only source from which they

[6] Smith spent the years 1740-1746 at Oxford after his university studies at Glasgow. For details, see his biographers: Rae (1895, ch. 3) and Ross (1995, ch. 5).

> expect their fortune, or even their ordinary revenue and subsistence. In order to acquire this fortune, or even to get this subsistence, they must, in the course of a year, execute a certain quantity of work of a known value (Smith, 1937, p. 717).

In this respect, Smith argued that "the endowments of schools and colleges have necessarily diminished more or less the necessity of application in the teachers" (Smith, 1937, p. 717). The reason is simple. In the endowed institutions where teachers' "subsistence is derived from a fund altogether independent of their success and reputation in their particular profession":

> [The teacher's] interest is set as directly in opposition to his duty as it is possible to set it. It is the interest of every man to live as much as his ease as he can; and if his emoluments are to be precisely the same, whether he does, or does not perform some very laborious duty, it is certainly his interest, at least as interest is vulgarly understood, either to neglect it altogether, or, if he is subject to some authority which will not suffer him to do this, to perform it in as careless and slovenly a manner as that authority will permit. If he is naturally active and a lover of labor, it is his interest to employ that activity in any way, from which he can derive some advantage, rather than in the performance of his duty, from which he can derive none (Smith, 1937, p. 718).

To cope with this problem (i.e., professional neglect in the endowed institutions), Smith proposed to address competition to the educational provision. Because Smith saw "self-interest as the mainspring of behavior, and competition as a necessary stimulus to exertion," it would not be strange if he felt that rivalry excited by an unrestrained

competition has brought about excellence in education (Adamson, 1964, p. 4). This conclusion was reflected in a statement he made about the advantage of free competition:

> [W]here the competition is free, the rivalship of competitors, who are all endeavoring to justle one another out of employment, obliges every man to endeavor to execute his work with a certain degree of exactness. . . . Rivalship and emulation render excellency, even in mean professions, an object of ambition, and frequently occasion the very greatest exertions (Smith, 1937, p. 717).

Aware that competition is an incentive to teach well, Smith now moved to advocate "natural liberty which meant freedom to exercise individual preference" (Adamson, 1964, p. 4). Arguing in favour of freedom of choice for the student, Smith thus said:

> Were the students . . . left free to chuse [choose] what college they liked best, such liberty might perhaps contribute to excite some emulation among different colleges. . . . If in each college the tutor or teacher should not be voluntarily chosen by the student . . . and if, in case of neglect, inability, or bad usage, the student should not be allowed to change his for another . . . such a regulation would not only tend very much to extinguish all emulation among the different tutors of the same college, but to diminish very much in all of them the necessity of diligence and of attention to their respective pupils (Smith, 1937, pp. 719-720).

Smith went further in supporting his objection to force or restraint, which was contrary to his natural system of liberty, with historical evidence illustrating the educational system of classical Greece and Rome. His main concern, when treating of the

ancient educational system, was the extent of its private character, together with the degree to which perfect liberty for the competitive pursuit of self-interest would be provided by the private arrangements. In other words, as Coccalis (1968) discovers, Smith intended to show that "private arrangements, growing out of the needs of the society and rivalry among teachers, should be sufficient to provide whatever education is required in a society at a given time, and would be provided in the best and most efficient manner" (p. 79); while asserting that:

> [In the ancient times] [m]asters had been found . . . in every art and science in which the circumstances of their society rendered it necessary or convenient for them to be instructed. The demand for such instruction produced, what it always produces, the talents for giving it; and the emulation which an unrestrained competition never fails to excite, appears to have brought that talent to a very high degree of perfection (Smith, 1937, p. 732).

Looking at the problem in this way, Smith came to the conclusion that the ancient system was more successful than the modern one largely because it sought to establish a free educational "environment within which self-love and efforts to better his [sic] condition could work optimally for himself [sic] or society" (Spengler, 1977, p. 36). And it is from this consideration, which springs his *laissez-faire* theorem of education, that the quality of education depends on the extent to which the system of natural liberty, together

with free competition, is allowed to prevail.

To put the point in a slightly different manner, Smith preferred to see education as a private thing [commodity] which each individual [customer] was left free to choose [buy] for his/her better interest [profit]. Saying from the private teacher's point of view, Smith confirmed this market-oriented perspective:

> If he sells his goods at nearly the same price, he cannot have the same profit, and poverty and beggary at least, if not bankruptcy and ruin will infallibly by his lot. If he attempts to sell them much dearer, he is likely to have so few customers that his circumstances will not be much mended (Smith, 1937, p. 733).

Implicit in this quotation is the assumption that for Smith education "is a sort of merchandising: the teacher should offer his [sic] goods in an open market, and their quality and the demand for them would regulate the support of his [sic] work" (requoted from Dankert, 1974, p. 159). In this connection, it can be asserted that Smith held high ideals concerning "the applicability of the free-market principle to education" while desiring to remove all obstacles to "the [free] operation of market forces in providing education" (West, 1971, p. 123).

D. Adam Smith and the Liberal Capitalist Foundation of Education

Smith's arguments on education might brand him as a supporter of the present Korean school curriculum, which emphasizes the economic goal of education and the self-seeking individualism in education. With regard to the relationship between economic development and education, first of all, it is noteworthy that "Smith's basic theme is that economic growth depends upon the accumulation of capital" (Skinner, 1996, p. 172). From this point he goes on to draw attention to the economic importance of education that is to him a form of human capital accumulation. In other words, Smith sees education as a factor making a contribution to the wealth of society "by directly influencing the growth of the annual product through its effects on the division of labor" (Freeman, 1984, pp. 382-383). Judging Smith on this basis, it might be contended that he is deeply interested in that kind of use or allocation of human resource that would maximize economic output while considering education as a vital source of economic growth.

A further point, equally important, arises from the fact that Smith proposes an education in which the free-pursuit of self-interest is the norm for educational motivation and action. His individualist standpoint in education is led by the supposition that "each individual is the best arbiter of his [sic] own interests," so that the individual self-seeking

based on the free-market principles, like competition and choice, would "maximize individual satisfactions" (Freeman, 1984, p. 383). Yet, it should be noted that Smith's endorsement of the free self-seeking individual rests on "the possible social benefits of the individual's propensities to self-love, egotism, self-interest, pride, and approbativeness," because he can explain "the logic of the mechanism that transformed the quest for self-interest" into the common good (Muller, 2002, pp. 51, 63):

> Every individual is continually exerting himself to find out the most advantageous employment for whatever capital he can command. It is his own advantage, indeed, and not that of the society, which he has in view. But the study of his own advantage naturally, or rather necessarily leads him to prefer that employment which is the most advantageous to the society (Smith, 1937, p. 421).
>
> The natural effort of every individual to better his own condition, when suffered to exert itself with freedom and security, is so powerful a principle, that it is alone, and without any assistance, not only capable of carrying on the society to wealth and prosperity, but of surmounting a hundred impertinent obstructions with which the folly of human laws too often incumbers its operations (Smith, 1937, p. 508).

Smith's main concern here is to defend the thesis that there should be "a more-or-less complete harmony between the general interests of society and the particular interest of individuals" (Viner, 1958, p. 223). And, for this he creates the famous metaphor of the 'invisible hand,' which meant the socially benevolent, yet unintended, result of the restless self-love of individuals:

> [Every individual] generally, indeed, neither intends to promote the public interest, nor knows how much he is promoting it. . . . [H]e intends only his own security. . . . [H]e intends only his own gain, and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention. Nor is it always the worse for the society that it was no part of it. By pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it (Smith, 1937, p. 423).

It seems, then, evident from the foregoing analysis that Smith's two sets of norms for education, i.e., the economic concept of human capital and the public transformation of self-interest could justify the neo-liberal turn of the Korean school curriculum stressing the individual and market forces in education. Yet, a still-accelerating discussion of the neo-liberal schooling, notably of the virtue of individuality in education may be stimulated by a more complex and sophisticated nineteenth-century English philosopher, whose plea for individual liberty has been hailed for over a century as the liberalist manifesto. His name is John Stuart Mill, and it is the purpose of the following section to provide a link between his praise of the free self-culture and the individualist/elitist cause of the present Korean school curriculum.

E. John Stuart Mill and the Ideal of Individuality in Education

The principle of individuality and individual freedom which define the liberal creed reflected themselves in Locke's and Smith's educational ideas. In considering the child's

individuality, leaving him/her at liberty to engage in his/her own pursuit, Locke tried to support his liberal attitude towards education. In Smith's case, the egoistic motif of self-love would be the central interpretative clue of his liberal-capitalist view of education whose goal was to justify the applicability of the free-market principle to education. As Locke and Smith before him, Mill was very sensitive to the central liberal values of individuality and freedom. Beginning with the traditional liberal thesis that the individual is active and self-determining, on the subject of education Mill threw out the liberal-individualist argument that each is the best judge of his/her own interests. Like his predecessors, at the centre of Mill's liberal philosophy of education lies the assumption that the proper condition of education is freedom. What distinguishes Mill's liberalism from Locke's and Smith's was, though, that Mill's ideal of individuality made him consider the social contribution of the able individual. In educational context, this elitist feature of Mill's liberalism would support the kind of education which produces exceptional individuals. It is only in such liberal and aristocratic interpretation of Mill's educational thought that I can hold out the hope for justifying the individualist and elitist cause of the Seventh National Curriculum.

All the major characteristics of the Seventh National Curriculum contribute to the ideal of individuality or individual freedom: a level-differentiated curriculum, a learner-

oriented curriculum, and the extended school autonomy. The important point here is that education in this environment is viewed as an opportunity for the free and full self-development, which is the purpose of a human being. It is why the new curriculum has focused upon the diversification of curricular options while encouraging a student's self-motivated/directed learning, independent studies, and other creative activities. But, there is another side to the ideal of negative freedom and individuality, which is related to the social utility or benefit of individual freedom. Given this public transformation of self-interest, then, the present Korean school curriculum is more comprehensive than we might think, and it can be seen as an approach to social well-being as well as individual perfection.

The above point of the new curriculum is the one Mill eloquently defended in *On Liberty*.[7] As Crisp (1997) notes, Mill's essay *On Liberty* was "an appeal to the Victorian public to reconsider their existing law and customary morality in the light of the principles of utility and of liberty, and thus to allow individuality to flourish" (p. 189). In other words, his plea for the free individual is a reaction against "the mid-Victorian

[7] Mill's essay *On Liberty* was published in 1859. About the context of Mill's work, Skorupski (1989) says that "he [Mill] epitomise[d] the liberalism which achieved its clearest statement and purest influence in the heyday of the nineteenth century-between the Napoleonic period and the growth of big business, socialism and empire" (p. 338). In this respect, Mill had been provided a historical pretext for writing his *On Liberty* by the early years of the nineteenth century which were decades of liberal reaction against the excesses of Jacobinism in the French Revolution (and of Bonapartism after it) and decades of romantic reaction against eighteenth century enlightenment.

middle-class conception of respectability, and the stifling effect it had on individuals whose lives were circumscribed by its demands" (Ryan, 1998, p. 515). As Donner (1991) puts it, "Mill [was] apprehensive about the prevalent dead weight of custom; [witnessing] people being pressured to conform to customary activities and ideas rather than to work out their own convictions and ways of life" (p. 150).

This suggests that the main task Mill set for himself in *On Liberty* was to fix a limit "to the legitimate interference of collective opinion with individual independence" (Mill, 2003/1859, p. 91). Berger (1984), referring to Mill's fear of the pressure towards stagnant conformism, observes that:

> His concern in *On Liberty* was with nonlegal control of the individual through the medium of "public opinion." Society can enforce the prevailing opinion and feeling by means other than civil penalties, through which "it practices a social tyranny more formidable than many kinds of political oppression." Mill described such social pressures as a fetter to the development of individuals and as producing servility to prevailing custom (pp. 227-228).

In other words, Mill was "concerned about the negative consequence of the homogenization of modern society" (Capaldi, 2004, p. 154). It is this consideration which explains why Mill was interested in Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* (1831), whose warning about the tyranny of the majority in a democratic society fits perfectly with "Mill's antipathy to the inevitable march of democracy" (Ryan, 1998, p. 516). In

Tocqueville's words describing the new form of authority,

> The very essence of democratic government consists in the absolute sovereignty of the majority; for there is nothing in democratic states which is capable of resisting it. . . . The moral authority of the majority is partly based upon the notion that there is more intelligence and more wisdom in a great number of men collected together than in a single individual . . . The moral power of the majority is founded upon yet another principle, which is, that the interests of the many are to be preferred to those of the few. . . . The authority of a king is purely physical . . . But the majority possesses a power which is physical and moral at the same time . . . In America, the majority raises very formidable barriers to the liberty of opinion (Tocqueville, 1946/1831, pp. 182-192).

Keeping in mind that Mill was acutely conscious of the circumstances of his age, his passion evident in *On Liberty* owed much to the nineteenth-century German Romanticism. Humboldt's influence was particularly strong, and so Capaldi (2004) insists that "*On liberty* be interpreted as a restatement of Humboldt prompted by Mill's recognition of the additional problem of the masses (Tocqueville)" (p. 269). Much more directly, Mill's own comment on his debt to Humboldt and other German philosophers, found in his *Autobiography* (1873), attests to this point:

> [T]he leading thought of the book [*On Liberty*]. . . . The unqualified championship of it by William [Wilhelm] von Humboldt is referred to in the book; but he by no means stood alone in his own country. During the early part of the present [nineteenth] century the doctrine of the rights of individuality, and the claim of the moral nature to develop itself in its own way, was pushed by a whole school of German authors even to exaggeration; and the writings of Goethe . . . seeking whatever defense they admit of in the theory of the right and duty of

self-development (Mill, 1924/1873, pp. 178-179).

Further, in *On Liberty* Mill quoted some passages from Humboldt's tract, *The Sphere and Duties of Government* (1854) where Humboldt, like Mill several years later, was concerned with defining the limits of the state while bringing the free, self-conscious, or self-determining individual to a focus:

> "The end of man, or that which is prescribed by the eternal or immutable dictates of reason, and not suggested by vague and transient desires, is the highest and most harmonious development of his powers to a complete and consistent whole"; that, therefore, the object "towards which every human being must ceaselessly direct his efforts, and on which especially those who design to influence their fellow men must ever keep their eyes, is the individuality of power and development"; that for this there are two requisites, "freedom, and variety of situations"; and that from the union of these arise "individual vigor and manifold diversity", which combine themselves in "originality" (Mill, 2003, pp. 73-74; See also Humboldt, 1854/1852, pp. 11-13).

It becomes clear from the statement that Mill's fame as the major Victorian champion of the ideal of self-development "lies in his affirmation of a romantic conception of individuality" (Rees, 1985, p. 11). Also, the importance of self-development gave Mill the pretext with which to proceed to the defence of liberty, for "the liberty" in his view "will promote the individuality required for self-development" (Donner, 1991, p. 150). Aware "men cannot develop and flourish and become fully

human unless they are left free from interference," Mill desired to remove all obstacles to liberty, which means "the rigid limitation of the right of coerce" (Berlin, 1996, pp. 146-147).

Having made these points, Mill may well have said that the free development of individuality is related to "the authority he claims for his view of human nature" (Gray, 1996, p. 203). According to Mill, a human being is autonomous and self-sufficient in his [sic] original state, and therefore all he [sic] requires is only to be left alone to pursue his [sic] own good in his [sic] own way. Moreover, Mill's conception of human nature is developmental to its core, because he acknowledges a view of "humans as developing, seeking, and growing beings" (Donner, 1991, p. 142). In Mill's own words, "Human nature is not a machine . . . but a tree, which requires to grow and develop itself on all sides, according to the tendency of the inward forces which make it a living thing" (Mill, 2003, p. 134). In this context, Mill believed in spontaneous self-development and, more importantly, admitted the point that "freedom alone is sufficient for human growth" (Gouinlock, 1986, p. 47).

One is now left to assume that the relevance of Mill's liberty principle to education consists in the bearing of freedom on education. That is, arguing in favour of self-culture as the proper environment for education, Mill would allow the students as much freedom

from interference as possible. Of course, at root in this liberal-individualist position was "his passionate belief that men are made human by their capacity for choice—choice of evil and good equally" (Berlin, 1996, p. 148). In referring to Mill's commitment to the individual's freedom to choose, Berlin (1996) writes: "He [Mill] thought that others like them [great individuals] could be educated, and when they were educated, would be entitled to make choices, and that these choices must not, within certain limits, be blocked or directed by others" (p. 153). What is involved here is "Mill's conception of the good life that ranks lives which are in large measure self-chosen over those that are customary" (Gray, 1996, p. 208). Berlin (1996) supports this view, saying that:

> For him [Mill] man differs from animals primarily neither as the possessor of reason, nor as an inventor of tools and methods, but as a being capable of choice, one who is most himself [sic] in choosing and not being chosen for; the rider and not the horse; the seeker of ends, and not merely of means, ends that he [sic] pursues, each in his [sic] own fashion: with the corollary that the more various these fashions, the richer the lives of men become; the larger the field of interplay between individuals, the greater the opportunities of the new and the unexpected; the more numerous the possibilities for altering his [sic] own character in some fresh or unexplored direction, the more paths open before each individual, and the wider will be his [sic] freedom of action and thought (pp. 135-136).

The above passage helps put forward Mill's educational requirement, which is to say the autonomous choice that reflects his direct appeal to each student's right to express

his [sic] individuality in developing all that was unique in himself/herself. In this way, he "would like to see teachers providing within the school room a substitute for the diversity of opinion characteristic of life outside it" (McCallister, 1931, p. 363). What is significant in this consideration is Mill's fear or disapproval concerning the silencing of the different voice in the classroom. An excerpt from *On Liberty* duly confirms Mill's respect for individuality:

> It is not by wearing down into uniformity all that is individual in themselves, but by cultivating it, and calling it forth, within the limits imposed by the rights and interests of others, that human beings become a noble and beautiful object of contemplation. . . . [B]y the same process human life also becomes rich, diversified, and animating, furnishing more abundant aliment to high thoughts and elevating feelings, and strengthening the tie which binds every individual to the race, by making the race infinitely better worth belonging to. In proportion to the development of his individuality, each person becomes more valuable to himself, and is therefore capable of being more valuable to others (Mill, 2003, p. 137).

Although Mill argued much in support of his "romantic liberalism" that "recognizes the internal culture of individual character," nevertheless, his case against uniformity or standardization remained committed to the utilitarian debate over the social benefit of individuality or individual freedom (Jacobs, 1991, p. 147). According to Mill, individual vigour and manifold diversities are the leading essentials of social progress. In *On Liberty* he illustrated this point by reference to his own country, highlighting collective

mediocrity as the major obstacle to social advancement:

> The greatness of England is now all collective; individually small, we only appear capable of anything great by our habit of combining; and with this our moral and religious philanthropists are perfectly contented. But it was men of another stamp than this that made England what it had been; and men of another stamp will be needed to prevent its decline (Mill, 2003, p. 143).

Elsewhere,[8] presenting a striking contrast to the nineteenth-century England, Mill quotes a passage from Grote's *History of Greece* (1846-1856) which describes Athenian tolerance for individuality:

> Within the limits of the law, assuredly as faithfully observed at Athens as anywhere in Greece, individual impulse, taste, and even eccentricity, were accepted with indulgence; instead of being a mark, as elsewhere, for the intolerance of neighbors or of the public (Mill, 1859, II, p. 527; See also Grote, 1907/1846-1856, VI, p. 181).

Mill pointed to Athenian tolerance to show that such tolerance is necessary for the encouragement of genius (Irwin, 1998). The reason is that in a society which fails to encourage individuality and originality "genius . . . is either fatally stunted in its growth,

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[8] I mean Mill's essay on Grote's *History of Greece*. Like Smith who used his discussion of education in Classical antiquity effectively as a weapon to support his *laissez-faire* philosophy of education, Mill tried to make his case in favour of individual freedom through a series of arguments for and against the Classical Athenian democracy. It was in this context that Mill was interested in Grote's works which constituted the first rank contribution of his time to the study of Greek history and philosophy. In fact, Mill's main Classical publications were reviews of Grote. For a detailed account of Mill's Classical (especially Greek)

or if its native strength forbids this, it usually retires into itself, and dies without a sign" (Mill, 2003, p. 139). Here we find Mill developing his brand of elitism stressing "the [social] importance of genius and the necessity of allowing it to unfold itself freely both in thought and in practice" (Ibid.). At the centre of Mill's eulogy of the persons of genius who, though few in number, are "the salt of the earth, [and] without them, human life would be become a stagnant pool" is the assumption that "initiation of all wise or noble things comes and must come from the [exceptional] individuals" (Mill, 2003, pp. 138, 140). And on this, Mill concerned himself with the fact that persons of genius, "instead of being deterred, should be encouraged in acting differently from the mass" (Mill, 2003, p. 140). Moreover, Mill thinks, it is important to provide a friendly environment for self-will or self-assertion, since "genius can only breathe freely in an atmosphere of freedom" (Mill, 2003, pp. 138-139).

From the educational standpoint, Mill's emphatic references to persons of original genius, coupled with his scornful rejection of inoffensive mediocrities, led him not surprisingly to endorse his own aristocratic tendencies in education. As Roellinger (1952) rightly remarks, Mill's favourite attitude to great minds and the education by which they are formed was closely connected with "a growing anxiety in Mill over what seemed to

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interests and their effects upon his philosophy, see T. H. Irwin (1998).

him to be a failure somewhere in modern civilization to produce the type of exceptional man, the able individual" (p. 252). But it was also a reflection of his low opinions concerning the ignorant, vulgar-minded multitude whose prejudiced judgments were inferior to those of intellectually superior individuals. The result is that to prevent a disastrous tyranny of the uninformed, it was necessary to subjugate ordinary people to persons of genius, who were able to make better judgments. This subjugation shows Mill at the height of his reaction against the collective spirit of his age that "the opinions of masses of merely average men are everywhere become or becoming the dominant power" (Mill, 2003, p. 140). And it was in this light that he developed such idea of education that "will produce great men able to do the great things (Roellinger, 1952, p. 252). In "Professor Sedgwick's Discourse," therefore, Mill expressed his elitist view of education; while discussing the purpose of university education:

> [T]he education by which great minds are formed. To rear up minds with aspirations and faculties above the herd, capable of leading on their countrymen to greater achievements in virtue, intelligence, and social well-being; to do this, and likewise so to educate the leisured classes of the community generally, that they may participate as far as possible in the qualities of these superior spirits, and be prepared to appreciate them and follow in their steps (Mill, 1859, I, pp. 95-96).

In the same vein, in his *Inaugural Address at St. Andrew's* (1867)[9] Mill proposed a liberal education, the end of which is to breed and train "an educated elite to whose superiority of cultivated intelligence the majority would show due deference" (Garforth, 1979, p. 166). A major point here is that "Mill thought it natural and indispensable to establish the authority of the best-educated" (Kim, 1986, p. 186). This means that ordinary people should "fall back upon the authority of still more cultivated minds," whose superior qualities will lead the mass of their countrymen to social worthies. Mill's trust in the leadership of the cultured few seems to find its justification in his "concept of social utility that predicted to the notion of the improvement of mankind in terms of the [ablest] individual human mind" (Coccalis, 1970, pp. 50-51). Again, we see Mill dictated by the aristocratic belief that every significant social change, such as social progress, is motivated by the unremitting exertions of "a group of educated, rational or cultivated superiors," not by the uninstructed, mean masses (West, 1965, p. 138). Mill's elitism is based upon a 'noble' educational aim to bring about "an intellectual clerisy," by which he means "an exceedingly small number of minds of the highest class" (Roellinger, 1952, p. 254). And, as Thwing (1916) aptly notes, Mill's commitment to intellectual elitism,

[9] Mill's only piece of specifically education writing (Mill, 1994/1867). As Curtis and Boultwood (1963) point out, "Mill's *Rectorial Address to the students of St. Andrew's* was one of a group of essays dealing with the meaning of a liberal education which appeared during the nineteenth century" (p. 414).

referred to above, can be supported by the witty assumption that "If the large plateau of general culture needs lifting, the need is great of the raising of the Himalaya peaks of thought and of power" (p. 172).

F. John Stuart Mill's Liberalism as a Rationale of the Seventh National Curriculum

Such is the reading of Mill's liberty case, and to end this discussion about his liberal-individualist position two points need to be of special note: The first concerns Mill's romantic outlook stressing individual sovereignty, which means "freedom for the individual to go his [sic] own way and live his [sic] own life" (Houghton, 1964, p. 290). Mill's main argument was that a human is an autonomous individual who has a "power of voluntarily disposing of his own lot in life" (Mill, 2003, p. 170). From this account we can conclude that 'self-master' is key to his ideal of individuality. The second characteristic of Mill's liberalism is that Mill associated individual freedom with social well-being in the belief that "liberty" is "the only unfailing and permanent source of improvement" (Mill, 2003, p. 143). But Mill's opinion on this point should be read in the light of his elitist view of social progress, since driven by the Platonic conclusion that only "a more highly gifted and instructed One or Few" can achieve the general promotion of happiness Mill attached great importance to the free self-development of exceptional

individuals (Mill, 2003, p. 140).

The above two aspects of Mill's liberalism are crucial to an understanding of the Seventh National Curriculum. In the first place, Mill's concept of individuality requires that education should provide a free space for the individual to bring about his [sic] self-realization. The fundamental point is that each student has a right for his [sic] self-development. In this connection, it seems plausible to say that the proponents of the new curriculum, like Mill's readers, reiterate the liberal ideal of individual sovereignty while endorsing a student choice-right in education. In addition, Mill's reference to the significant role great minds played in bringing about social progress implies that the free demonstration of original genius must not be ignored, oppressed, or lost in the process of education. On the contrary, it should be encouraged, cultivated and even respected so that education can provide a friendlier environment for a gifted and superior minority who are the leading agents of social prosperity. In this approach, the grouping strategies of the present Korean school curriculum, targeting largely high ability learners, are justified as safeguarding the gifted and talented individuals from the domination of the average multitude. What is important here is an appeal to the danger of assimilation, under the sway of which, in Mill's words, "human capacities are withered and starved" (Mill, 2003, p. 136).

Through a unified reading of three great liberal thinkers—Locke, Smith, and Mill, I have tried in this chapter to present a philosophical analysis of the roots of competitive individualism that underlies the present Korean school curriculum. To sum up, Locke's conception of differences founded on nature, and his appreciation of personal freedom as an inborn right of human beings, could supply a theoretical background for the various grouping strategies of the Seventh National Curriculum aimed at more individualized education and more stretching lessons for the gifted and talented. The liberal-individualist principle of Smith's political economy, on the other hand, was taken to show that the free interaction/competition of self-interested individuals is best able to improve the standard or quality of education. In addition, Smith's utilitarian argument in favour of investing human being as a source of economic development would provide today's Korean curricular designers with information and a model of how to capitalize human resources on matters relating to wealth. Finally, Mill's liberalism, based upon the notion of 'negative' freedom, is clearly adequate to explain the educational values of the free-market way implicit of the Seventh National Curriculum. Even so, it is the elitist cause of Mill's liberalism emphasizing the possible social benefits of the individual genius that represents a central contribution to our discussion of the philosophical meaning of contemporary Korean school curriculum.

While it was through the individual and capitalist framework of classical liberalism that I have developed a conceptual analysis of an assemblage of neo-liberal economic elements to be found in the Korean Seventh National Curriculum Reform, my aim in the pages immediately following is to discuss some unintended problems posed by the liberal-individualist and market form of education. With this purpose in mind, I will invite attention to the social-democratic tradition of Karl Marx and John Dewey. Unquestionably, Marx's critical understanding of modern liberal-capitalist society will be used as a basis for analyzing the de-humanizing effects of the market-oriented curriculum reform in Korea, as represented by the problem of alienation in education. With emphasis given to the meaning of education in a democratic society, I will then address Dewey's communal vision of school democracy from which point I can critique the domination of economic rationalism in the present Korean school curriculum. At the bottom of my consideration of Marx's critical social theory and Dewey's social ideal of democracy is the idea of the school as a socially supported democratic community, which may confirm Richard Pring's (1986) critique of the neo-liberal education reform which fails to understand educational process as "a slow and uphill task requir[ing] resource, community backing, and long-term planning, not the short-term pressure arising out of market forces" (p. 67).

Chapter III.

The Seventh National Curriculum: A Social Democratic Critique

The neo-liberal rhetoric that schools should create the circumstances under which individuals make choices about themselves and their life plan is supported by the classical liberal view of "humanity" as "composed of individuals who are autonomous, rational, self interested utility maximisers" (Mills & King, 1995, p. 19). But, critics in the line of social-democratic tradition reject the neo-liberalist version of schooling on the basis that it would bring about the crisis of humanity that is essentially leading to a critical state of social relations. What emerges from this is a problem position from which to consider a communitarian critique of the neo-liberalist ideology of education made from a social-democratic perspective. As its name implies, what is distinctive about this alternative perspective is the assumption that "persons are able to become fully human and to live fully human lives by interacting harmoniously with the full range of human resources and the full human community" (Strike, 1989, p. 135).

An obvious way to critique the capitalist economic relationship, stressing the supremacy of an atomistic market, is to review Karl Marx's theory of alienation. In protest against the appalling cruelty of the industrial system as it existed in England in the

nineteenth century, Marx developed his theory against capitalism. Central to Marx's critique of modern industrial society was the conviction that the existing capitalist mode of production obscures the critical, social aspect of human nature and thus prevents the whole and real development of the human being. At this point, Marx developed the concept of the worker's alienation from labour to reveal the central weakness of nineteenth century liberalism: "The laissez-faire theory of organization did not create a social condition for the dignified education of free individuals but perpetuated an ideology which camouflaged the exploitation of man in the concrete world" (Nyberg, 1967, pp. 285-286).

To those who specifically criticize the neo-liberal agenda in education, on the other hand, John Dewey's social ideal of democracy is particularly appropriate. Like Marx, Dewey was skeptical of the traditional liberal form of society which "sets up a false antagonism between the individual and organized society" (Damico, 1978, p. 70). Dewey's attempt to define a satisfactory relationship between the individual and society was meant as a direct response to the negative effects of the economic conditions of capitalist America on human life—"loss of communal spirit, disintegration of social bonds and allegiances, impoverishment and destruction of the individual, impersonalization, massification, standardization, mechanization of human relationships,

materialism, etc" (Benitez, 1990, p. 116).[10] In this respect, Dewey's solution to the ills of capitalism was to revitalize the communal values of participatory democracy rather than to endorse Marx's prediction of development of socialism from capitalism. At the centre of Dewey's social project, then, lies "a democratic Great Community" where the collective norm based upon cooperative and collaborative goals, not the individualist value assigned to self-sufficiency and competitive achievement, becomes the rule of life (Caspary, 2000, p. 199).

With this approach, I will formulate in this chapter Marx's concept of alienation and Dewey's view of school community in such a way as to measure how the neo-liberalist economic trend of contemporary Korean school curriculum affects the social-democratic system of the school in relation to the educative process. Underpinning this is the belief that the social-democratic ideals of Marx and Dewey can be used to describe and critique the various ways that the neo-liberalist version of schooling constrains the capacity of individuals to grow and develop in unfettered ways.

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[10] There is no doubt that Dewey's critical position was born in reaction to the large-scale industrial and urban expansion of the United States that took place during the course of his formative and mature years, and intensified throughout the 1930s when he bore witness to the social and political malaise of American industrialization. However, there is another source of Dewey's anxiety in modern capitalist America, which has been traced back to his early experiences in the rural town of Burlington, Vermont, where he spent his childhood and developed his preference for the values of the small community. As Benitez (1990) notes, "the communal spirit of this small town would have deeply influenced Dewey's social outlook and coloured his critical views of urban society, as well as the communitarianism of his socio-political and educational philosophies" (p. 117). For a detailed description of the sources of Dewey's social-democratic thought, see Benitez (1990), pp. 113-123.

A. Karl Marx: The Problem of Alienation

Within the current school climate of Korea, curriculum is in favour of 'grouping strategies, based on ability' to provide course work and materials best suited to the different educational capabilities of the student. Yet, Gamoran and Berends (1987, p. 415) raise a question: "How are students affected by the stratification of secondary schools into curricular tracks and ability groups?" On the face of it, the answer to this question is that ability-grouping urges students to achieve the streamed social and academic identities and produces a polarized social structure among students (Ball, 1986). In other words, a level-differentiated curriculum widens the social gap or distance between academically more competent and successful students and less competent and successful ones, and, as such, it has a deleterious impact on the social atmosphere and sense of community in a school (Hargreaves, 1967; See also Jackson, 1964, pp. 119-120). It is, then, not surprising that the recent curricular decision in Korea "founded upon the idea that students have relatively fixed levels of ability and need to be taught accordingly" (Boaler *et al.*, 2000, p. 631) is blamed for separating students from each other while encouraging a feeling of alienation from the whole student body. Further, in such an atmosphere, the majority of students belonging to the mid-low academic tracks are forced to live a marginalized life and thus experience some estrangements from their latent

powers.

In this context Marx's concept of alienation and its educational implications are relevant, since the possibility comes into play that in the Seventh National Curriculum students will be ceaselessly alienated. Before launching the main discussion, I focus attention on Marx's ontology. Marx in his *Theses on Feuerbach* (1845) asserts that "humans are not contemplative but practical beings, and human essence lies in the ensemble of the social relations" (Feuer, 1959, pp. 243-245). In the same vein, Marx puts stress on the conscious and creative powers of humans to make, change, and advance their history, as expressed in the *Capital* (1867): "[H]uman history . . . [as] the work of man . . . reveals man's dealing with nature, discloses the direct productive activities of his life, thus throwing light upon social relations and the resultant mental conceptions" (Marx, 1957/1867, pp. 392-393, Note 2). Two consistent points here are that humans are social beings who "naturally" belong to a particular society, and that they are practical creators of circumstances. Nonetheless, Marx's message laid in his concept of human nature is a centred problem of social reality because at the center of his system of thought is the question, 'How can it be that the naturally creative, proactive, and social natures of human beings are completely distorted into its opposite?'

For Marx, humankind lives in a historically alienated condition where the general

logic of commodity production injects humane values into the industrial process. But, since he sees this capitalist state as a transition stage that could be transformed into a higher form of communal society, Marx has good reasons for claiming that the existing capitalist social order has no universality. Marx based his view of social transformation upon the dialectical theory of historical change. According to this negative method, human progress (a synthesis) is to be realized in the struggle between "prior history" (the thesis) and "real history" (antithesis). This is often known as 'historical materialism' because "Marx understood the dialectical process, not in terms of spiritual and rational development but in terms of the improvement of the economic and human conditions of social life" (Nyberg, 1967, p. 280).

Thus, visualizing the antinomies of history and humanity in an age of industrialism, Marx tried to convince the world that in the capitalist form of society, where monetary relations restrict social and human development, individuals cannot reach their full potential as human beings. Instead they are "reduced to a commodity, a thing, a dehumanist factor that can be calculated" (Nyberg, 1967, p. 277). As Hurst (2000) aptly notes, then, "alienation from others and from oneself is the result" (p. 12): First, there is alienation from others. Marx's argument is that private ownership of property under capitalism alienates individuals from each other and allows the exploitation of one group

(i.e., workers) by another (i.e., owners). In other words, private property hinders social integration while dividing groups of people according to their economic interests. In this respect, Marx declared that human society, or socialized humanity cannot develop until private ownership of property is abolished.

The second form of alienation, on the other hand, stems from oneself. Marx protested against the division of labour in this regard, because it helps crush human potential; while "[taking] whole individuals and [breaking] them up into specialized parts so that capitalism can function effectively and profitably as one large economic machine made up of human interrelated parts" (Hurst, 2000, p. 23). Implied in Marx's warning of 'the splintering effect of specialization on human natures' is that modern capitalist society prevents individuals from fully developing all their talents and expressing the many sides of their natures.

Yet, in order to better understand Marx's notion of alienation it seems necessary to look at his early fragments regarding "Alienated Labor" [11] in which he considered the act of alienation of practical human activity, labour from the following four aspects:

> (1) [T]he relationship of the worker to the *product of labor* as an alien object which dominates him. This relationship is at the same time the relationship to the sensuous external

[11] An English version of this manuscript is found in Fromm, 1963, pp. 93-109.

> world, to natural objects, as an alien and hostile world; (2) [T]he relationship of labor to the *act of production* within *labor*. This is the relationship of the worker to his own activity as something alien and not belonging to him; (3) [A]lienated labor turns the *species life of man* . . . into an *alien* being and into a means for his *individual existence*; (4) [*M*]*an* is *alienated* from other *men*. . . . [T]hat man is alienated from his species life means that each man is alienated from others, and that each of the others is likewise alienated from human life (Fromm, 1963, pp. 99, 103).

Marx's analysis of the four essential characteristics of alienated labour (i.e., alienation from the product of labour, from the process of production, from the human nature, and from fellow workers) demonstrates that in the capitalist form of society 'work' becomes 'alienated labour' which has a price and may be put up for sale. To clarify what is involved in becoming an inert commodity which can be bought and sold in the market, we will bring out a succinct passage from *Communist Manifesto* (1848):

> [Those] who must sell themselves piecemeal, are a commodity, like every other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition, to all the fluctuations of the market (Marx & Engels, 1999/1848, p. 71).

This can be compared to another statement where Marx lays stress on the imperativeness of alienated/commodified labour under capitalism:

> But the exercise of labor power, labor, is the worker's own life-activity, the manifestation of his own life. And this life-activity he sells to another person in order to secure the necessary means of subsistence. Thus, his life-activity is for him only a means to enable him to exist.

> He works in order to live. He does not even reckon labor as part of his life, it is rather a sacrifice of his life. It is a commodity which he has made over to another (Marx, 1891/1849, p. 20).

Ultimately, the dominant force behind these passages is the capitalist logic of accumulation, which forces the sacrifice of human potential in exchange for money. In sharp contrast with this capitalist outlook, however, Marx draws a clear distinction between a commodity and a human being. Needless to say, he believes that the instrumental market way to transform human value into commodity value from which capitalists can profit would be a great threat for humanity to achieve its moral ideal to be an end in itself rather than a means to an end. Thus, suffice it to say at this point that alienation related to estranged labour under capitalism is the main source of human degradation:

> Instead of a rich social life characterized by creative work, play, and recreation, artistic expression, intellectual stimulation, love, solidarity and cooperation, our lives are impoverished. The rich diversity of human possibilities is mindlessly reduced to one narrow, alienated goal: accumulating private wealth (McNally, 2002, p. 83).

It should be clear by now what constitutes alienation. First, alienation is a term that describes individuals who under capitalism cannot but live an isolated life from others

and themselves (Hurst, 2000). Similarly, alienation is a concept which explains human labour estranged from conscious, creative, and social activity. And, finally, alienation is a concept that "display[s] the devastating effect of capitalist production on human beings, on their physical and mental states and on the social processes of which they are a part" (Ollman, 1971, p. 131).

With this understanding of Marx's concept of alienation in mind we proceed to consider its potential impact on the alienation of the student in the capitalist classroom. As Bowles and Gintis (1976) point out, schooling in modern industrial society is an alienated activity and the forms of consciousness and behaviour fostered by the educational system must themselves be alienated. By the same token, Sarup (1978) assumes that "under the conditions of capitalism education is conducted in such alienating circumstances that it becomes a process of dehumanization" (p. 129). A natural consequence is the alienation of the student from the product of labour (knowledge), the process of production (learning), the species life of human (creative and social nature), and from fellow workers (classmates):

> Alienated labor is reflected in the student's lack of control over his or her education, the alienation of the student from the curriculum content, and the motivation of school work through a system of grades and other external rewards rather than the student's integration with either the process or the outcome of the educational "production process" (Bowles &

Gintis, 1976, p. 131).

While experiencing these practical breakdowns of human activity in the classroom, the student cannot maintain his [sic] conscious, creative, and social whole because, as Ollman (1971) succinctly states, "what is left of the individual after all these cleavages have occurred is a mere rump" (p. 134). In this respect, "the essence of alienation is that the whole has broken up into numerous parts so that the complete return of man to himself [sic] as a social being can no longer be ascertained" (Ollman, 1971, p. 135).

Although all students are considered alienated in the ways and to the degree, our main concern following Marx should be on the fate of the less fortunate members of the school. This emphasizes the marginalized and isolated states of students who are placed in low academic streams and labeled as failures, or losers in the school (Gamoran & Berends, 1987). Accordingly, we see the alienation of the student as a useful way of describing the educational disadvantages of students who do not belong to the dominant peer groups in school (Fletcher, 2000).

Given that no concept is more central to Marx's critique of capitalism than alienation, the capitalist form of schooling provokes at least two forms of a student's alienation. The first kind of alienation is concerned with the marginalized condition of a

student who "experiences life as empty, meaningless and absurd, or who fails to sustain a sense of self-worth" (Wood, 2004, p. 8). This is what Plamenatz (1975) refers to as "spiritual alienation" (p. 141). The reason is that when a student is estranged from his/her life activity, the lack of a meaningful participation in the school leads to a psychological break from self, or lack of self-actualization. In the meantime, we can identify the alienation generated by the existing social distance between individual students. Aside from spiritual alienation, this is called "social alienation" because it implies a separation from social relations (Elster, 1985, p. 100). As a result, it puts a "constraint on the capacity of students to develop cooperative and collaborative relationships" (Fletcher, 2000, p. 72). In Freire's (1993) words, this is a "distortion of the vocation of becoming more fully human" as a social being (p. 26).

Now, there are reasons to oppose neo-liberal policies, particularly grouping strategies based upon academic ability. First, as several qualitative researchers have argued, educational labeling may reduce the self-esteem of those students placed in mid- to low-ability groups on the grounds that it alienates them from their creative powers (Ireson *et al.*, 2001; Ireson & Hallam, 2001, ch. 3; Willig, 1963; Powell *et al.*, 1985, pp. 119-124). This explains why streaming threatens the full human development of the many common students, achieving the 'normalization' of structural inequalities through

the ideological distribution of educational resources (Fletcher, 2000). Moreover, labeling and self-fulfilling prophecies in education can be denounced because streaming strategies tend to increase the social distance between students by means of separating individuals from one-another and even turning them against each other. Ability grouping, then, is a 'legitimized' excuse for alienating students from their social nature, while functioning to isolate groups of students who are marginalized in low academic bands from groups of students who are placed in high academic streams.

It has already been said that current curriculum reform in Korea introduced a flexible level-differentiated curriculum on the basis of each student's academic capability. Hence, individual differences being considered in the process of learning the level of difficulties in such subjects as mathematics, English language, Korean language, social science, and science should be adjusted to each student's ability. The rhetoric of the government is that ability grouping with appropriate differentiated instruction is clearly beneficial, not only to high-ability students but also to average and low-ability students. The proponents even proclaim that it may increase the self-esteem of slower learners with instruction received in homogeneously streamed groups (Allan, 1991; Kulik, 1989).

Despite these points, the above discussion of Marx's concept of alienation and its implications to education shows how the grouping strategies of the Seventh National

Curriculum—setting students by ability—could affect the alienation of the student, both spiritually and socially. Further, it draws a compelling picture of the marginalized state of groups of students who find themselves allocated to low streams and identified as failures within the formal normative culture of the school, although 'winners' (i.e., academically more developed students) are also considered alienated in the sense that they are separated from 'losers' (i.e., academically less developed students).[12] The thoughts behind such criticism of the academic streaming are doubtlessly that education is a human service, the goal of which is "the return of man to himself [sic], his [sic] self-realization" (Fromm, 1963, p. 43), and that education is a social good whose primary concern is to protect and enhance the common interest of the social majority rather than to serve a privileged few.

B. Between Alienation and Democracy

So far as influence on contemporary Korean schooling is concerned, market-oriented education reform can claim some success, because emphasizing 'change,' 'competition,' and 'customer' in education Korean curricular reformers try to address the market measures to the classroom. For them, the idealized end point of fully marketized

[12] For the alienation of top-set students, see Boaler *et al.* (2000) and Boaler (1997a; 1997b).

school would be one where students are treated mainly as individuals who are self-governors and the curriculum is differentiated according to each student's individual ability, interest, or other vocational needs.

Nevertheless, viewing education through Marx's concept of alienation we can rightly dethrone the neo-liberal contention that "individual discipline and motivation are the key to success in school, and their absence, by contrast, the source of our most pressing educational problems" (Fletcher, 2000, p. 73). A major contribution of Marx's critical social theory to the curriculum field in this light is to show the alienating effects of modern capitalist schooling.

Whereas Marx's fear of human beings' loss of respect for the communal values in modern society is useful as a critique of the neo-liberalist version of schooling where "self-as-individual has become the beginning, the middle, and the endpoint from which our [educational] discourses proceed," it is precisely in the context of this problematic that John Dewey's vision of school democracy comes to the fore (Houser & Kuzmic, 2001, p. 449). As Benitez (1990) observes, Dewey was deeply concerned with "man's loss of the sense of belonging to a meaningful totality in modern society," and his democratic theory of education was "a philosophical attempt to deal with the reality and effects of fragmentation and alienation in modern capitalist society" (pp. 117, 123).

What is valid in this observation made by Benitez is the fact that it reminds us that for Dewey the notion of democracy plays a similar role to the one that the notion of alienation plays in Marx's critical social theory, namely, as the ideal paradigm of a truly human way of life. This is ultimately why Dewey formulated the problem of education with his notion of democratically organized community while presenting a moral objection to the de-humanizing effects of modern industrial society. And it is only in the context of this social ideal of democracy that I intend Dewey's philosophy of education as a 'midwife' of his communitarian ideal of a unified society to be taken as a critique of the neo-liberal economic view of education characteristic of contemporary Korean school curriculum, to which I now turn.

C. John Dewey: The Meaning of Education in a Democratic Society

One general objection to the Seventh National Curriculum is the claim that it is undemocratic. The argument is that institutionalizing the individual and market way in the school will bring about the ultimate breakdown of democratic moral life, which relies on an active engagement in social life and a volunteer spirit of cooperation for the common good. Critics argue that because most students have no experience working with others, under the present school environment they do not encounter the kind of living

they will later experience as adults, and thus they do not build suitable social relationships with their peers. Related to this, it is also true that the new curriculum seems not free from the ideological critique of schooling: "working favourably for those students of high socioeconomic background" the grouping strategies of the present Korean school curriculum according to the academic performance of students will reinforce the "inherited advantage (and disadvantage)" some students have as well as the existing structural inequality of social classes (Chan & Mok, 2001, p. 33; Esping-Andersen, 1999, p. 43). Obviously, the assumption to be referred to here is that there is high correlation between academic achievement and socioeconomic status. In this respect, we find the Seventh National Curriculum based upon "a politics of supremacy" rather than "a politics of justice," the main goal of which is to perpetuate the Gramscian hegemony of the dominant class (Gill, 1995, p. 400). Also, the neo-liberal statement about students being different in nature and therefore needing different treatment (i.e., a differentiated curriculum) can be criticized as systematically silencing the collective voice of the less powerful groups of the school, while functioning well to justify the individual needs and interests of a few capable elite.

The Seventh National Curriculum in academic labeling might be accused of being anti-democratic and anti-communitarian, and Dewey's social vision of school democracy

needs to be under consideration. Dewey saw school as a socially supportive democratic community where the student experiences a sense of belonging and personal development through participation in collective forms of life. Dewey's ideal was a high level of student participation in schoolwork with the result of sharing the common good. Thus, before turning attention to his communal views of schooling, I take a brief look a Dewey's idea on participatory democracy.

For Dewey, democracy is a word of many meanings. But a careful examination of Dewey's work makes clear that "democracy is more than a form of government; it is [rather] a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience" (Dewey, 1916b, p. 93).[13] In line with this broader conception of democracy, Dewey suggested that "the task of democracy is that of creation of a freer and more humane experience in which all share and to which all contribute" (Dewey, 1939, p. 230). No doubt, Dewey's reliance upon the social/moral ideal of democracy follows from his faith in "a way of living together in which mutual and free consultation rule instead of force, and in which cooperation instead of brutal competition is the law of life" (Dewey, 1937a, p. 417).

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[13] In his lecture titled "Democracy and Educational Administration," for instance, Dewey defined democracy as something profound than a kind of political mechanism, saying that: "Democracy is much broader than a special political form, a method of conducting government, of making laws and carrying on governmental administration by means of popular suffrage and elected officers. It is that, of course. But it is something broader and deeper than that. The political and governmental phase of democracy is a means, the best means so far found, for realizing ends that lie in the wide domain of human relationships and the development of human personality" (Dewey, 1937c, p. 217).

Dewey' emphasis upon engagement in social life implies that he thought of humans as social creatures who "are not isolated non social atoms, but are men only when in intrinsic relations to men" (Dewey, 1888, p. 231). His message is simple: Human nature is essentially social, and, as McKenna (2001) rightly stresses, this is supported by biology: "We are born dependent and . . . to survive . . . we need to understand our interconnectedness with others and encourage and . . . create and sustain . . . flourishing community" (p. 104).

Given that there is an organic connection between the individual and society, Dewey now developed a new individualism, as opposed to "the classical liberal model of the individual" on which "there is the individual, the maker of contracts, distinct from the association of individuals—a human object with no relationships, attachments, natural commitments" (McKenna, 2001, p. 111). For Dewey, then, it is a mistake to "see the individual and society as two essentially distinct, opposing, or duelling entities," for society is a society of individuals and the individual is always a social individual (McKenna, 2001, p. 111). To defend this picture of what an individual would be in these terms, he further wrote:

> [Old] thinking treats individualism as if it were something static, having a uniform content. It ignores the fact that mental and moral structure of individuals, the pattern of their

> [individuals'] desires and purposes, change with every great change in social constitution. Individuals who are not bound together in associations whether domestic, economic, religious, political or educational, are monstrosities. It is absurd to suppose that the ties which hold them together are merely external and do not react into mentality and character, producing the framework of personal disposing (Dewey, 1930, pp. 80-81).

On it, Dewey professed that to develop individuality should not mean a sort of isolation or separation of one person from another but rather "a matter of spirit, of soul, of mind, and the way in which one enters into cooperative relations with others" (Dewey, 1923a, p. 179). The lesson here is that "there is something deep within human nature itself which pulls toward settled relationships and [human] happiness which is full of content and peace is found only in enduring ties with others" (Gouinlock, 1994, p. 119).

Aware that "the individual and society are neither opposed to each other nor separated from each other" (Dewey, 1897b, p. 55), Dewey was keen to place great importance on the question: How can the individual realize his [sic] humanity in and through social interaction? In Dewey's view, the question is primarily educational because he thinks "the individual to be educated is a social being" (Dewey, 1897a, p. 86). For this reason, Dewey regards education as the "midwife" of democracy, without which "democracy" cannot "be born anew every generation" (Dewey, 1916c, p. 139).

At the same time, Dewey was committed to "the construction of an education

which will develop that kind of individuality which is intelligently alive to the common life and sensitively loyal to its common maintenance" (Dewey, 1918, p. 57). Again, it left unanswered a large question: "What direction shall we give to the work of the schools so that the richness and fullness of the democratic way of life in all its scope may be promoted?" (Dewey, 1937b, p. 190) Dewey's answer is that "the school is primarily a social institution" (Dewey, 1897a, p. 86) where the child lives and "becomes a person by means of developing a sense of his/her self in the process of interaction with others" (Campbell, 1995, p. 41). This means that "the child ought to have the same motives and the same standards in the school, as the adult in the wider social life to which he belongs" (Dewey, 1909, p. 274). That is why the school in a democratic society should be made itself "a genuine form of active community life, instead of a place set apart in which to learn lessons" (Dewey, 1899, p. 10).

In this connection of the social direction of schooling, Dewey intended to re-organize the school upon a cooperative basis, for schooling as a mode of social life draws up the charge of "the best and deepest moral training which one gets through having to enter into proper relations with others in a unity of work and thought" (Dewey, 1897a, p. 88). Related to his emphasis on the ethical relationship of school to society, Dewey encouraged "the social spirit or motive" which is "the product of people living

together and doing certain things in common, and sharing in each other's activities and each other's experience" (Dewey, 1916a, p. 75). The reason is spelled in what follows where Dewey addresses himself to the public meaning of education:

> I take it for granted that we all admit that, so far as our common school system of education is concerned, the main business must be to prepare the boys and girls and young men and women who come to these schools to be good citizens, in the broadest sense. These pupils must be prepared to be members of communities, recognizing the ties that bind them to all the other members of the community, recognizing the responsibility they have to contribute to the upbuilding of the life of the community (Dewey, 1923b, p. 158).

But when Dewey puts stress on the "education which will discover and form the kind of individual who is the intelligent carrier of a social democracy" (Dewey, 1918, p. 57), he is doing more than thinking about the importance of the social aim of schooling; he is painting the picture of the harmonious and cooperative relations among individuals to make the type of argument in favour of his democratic ideal of a fuller life:

> Democracy as a way of life is controlled by personal faith in personal day-by-day working together with others. Democracy is the belief that even when needs and ends or consequences are different for each individual, the habit of amicable co-operation . . . is itself a priceless addition to life . . . . To co-operate by giving differences a chance to show themselves because of the belief that the expression of difference is not only a right of the other person but is a means of enriching one's own life-experience, is inherent in the democratic personal way of life (Dewey, 1939, p. 228).

As the essence of cooperation, then, Dewey commended the virtue of "fraternity which means the will to work together" (Dewey, 1941, p. 277). And for this he sought to develop the social mind to "join freely and fully in shared or common activities" (Dewey, 1916b, p. 130). In addition, Dewey's democratic sense made him bear in mind "intelligent sympathy" or benevolent regard for others (Dewey, 1916b, p. 128). The reason is that the democratic way of life requires "sensitive responsiveness to the interests, sufferings, and rights of others" to break down the social barriers and thus make experiences more communicable (Rockefeller, 1991, p. 243; also see Dewey, 1916b, p. 127).

This humane aspect in Dewey's philosophy coincides with his democratic vision of the school as a cooperative community, for it encourages him to look at "the importance of helping students to live more cooperatively and to work together to accomplish tasks that cannot be done individually" (Campbell, 1995, p. 217). In such a collaborative, social climate, Dewey made each individual "a sharer or partner in the associated activity so that he feels its success as his success, its failure as his failure" (Dewey, 1916b, p. 18). To create and maintain this kind of community in the school he objected to developing a 'socialized intelligence' which means "the willingness of the participants to commit themselves to a genuinely cooperative procedure" (Gouinlock, 1986, p. 62). His

commitment to this public-mindedness or social consciousness to act in deliberate concert with others is guided by the conviction that the school as a mode of social life should be a place where the child is "stimulated and controlled in his work through the life of the community" (Dewey, 1897a, p. 88). With this collective view of the school in mind, Dewey proposed that "the true centre of correlation of the school subjects is not science, nor literature, nor history, nor geography, but the child's own social activities" (Dewey, 1897a, pp. 89, 91). What is implicit is that Dewey conceived of education as a continuing reconstruction of experience in and through proper relations with others, while desiring to provide education in a school organized along the lines of the principle of shared activity.

Dewey put special emphasis on "direct participation in school affairs upon a genuine community basis" (Dewey, 1934, p. 184) because, in his mind, education is a living experience or activity which is to be possible only when one is engaged in a community, and prevails when participants in associated life carry on with their relationships by means of communication pervaded with mutual respect and regard. Given this view, he challenged "the idea of education as related to individual achievement" (Dewey, 1916a, p. 72) and sought to find "some community project in which each can take his own part, and in the carrying out of which each can make his

own contribution" (Dewey, 1923a, p. 170). Dewey's view of the student as participator, not spectator, is rooted in his conviction that every person is capable of "lead[ing] his own life from coercion and imposition by others provided right conditions are supplied" (Dewey, 1939, p. 227). But, this democratic attitude toward every human being's potential possibilities is also connected to his deep faith in human equality that "every human being, independent of the quantity or range of his personal endowment, has the right to equal opportunity with every other person for development of whatever gifts he has" (Dewey, 1939, pp. 226-227). And, it is from this "vision of the good life held by the masses of men" that we can see the essence of Dewey's philosophy of democracy (Mason, 1959, p. 82). So, Dewey exclaimed that:

> What does democracy mean save that the individual is to have a share in determining the conditions and the aims of his own work; and that, upon the whole, through the free and mutual harmonizing of different individuals, the work of the world is better done than when planned, arranged, and directed by a few, no matter how wise or of how good intent that few? How can we justify our belief in the democratic principle elsewhere? (Dewey, 1903, p. 233)

To this typically democratic argument he added:

> Through mutual respect, mutual toleration, give and take, the pooling of experiences, it [democracy] is ultimately the only method by which human beings can succeed in carrying on this experiment in which we are all engaged, whether we want to be or not, the greatest

> experiment of humanity – that of living together in ways in which the life of each of us at once profitable in the deepest sense of the word, profitable to himself and helpful in the building up of the individuality of others (Dewey, 1938, p. 303).

D. The Relationship of John Dewey's Philosophy to the Seventh National Curriculum

I have so far examined Dewey's vision of school democracy as a form of living community. Now I turn to consider the relevance of his democratic ideal for critical evaluation of the present Korean school curriculum. On this, there are several points to be mentioned. One is Dewey's interest in the social conception of the self. As presented, it was Dewey's belief that human beings are born to, and dependent on, other human beings and therefore we become human by means of developing a sense of self in the process of interacting with others. In light of this social self or social individual we are allowed to criticize the Seventh National Curriculum, which contributes to widen the social distance between self and others by means of creating an individual and market circumstance in the school.

Meanwhile, Dewey's democratic stance for "the best interests of the people at large" (Dewey, 1946, p. 474) helps critique the elitist cause of the Seventh National Curriculum. As pointed out earlier, the present Korean school curriculum introduces grouping and the setting apart of students according to ability with the view of

increasing effectiveness, efficiency, and economy in education. But it is beyond doubt that this academic labeling is mainly for the convenience of top-set students, while bringing about the disadvantage and marginalization of the great number of average middle-low track students. The grouping strategies of the new curriculum, then, are faulted for betraying the democratic spirit, since, as Dewey posited, "democracy is concerned not with freaks or geniuses or heroes or divine leaders but with associated individuals in which each by intercourse with others somehow makes the life of each more distinctive" (Dewey, 1919, p. 53).

Furthermore, Dewey's democratic humanism relying on intelligent sympathy or goodwill strongly indicates that the first priority of education should be the preservation and nurturing of the victims of a given system. This explains why educators must give their first attention and care to "the lost life and the threatened life" to prevent "the death of social majorities," so to say, in the school (McMurtry, 2001, p. 851). From this life-inherent perspective we can criticize the Seventh National Curriculum, which fails to recognize education as a human service and the schools as life-serving institutions, while trying to legitimize the competitive and individualized market culture in the classroom.

As McCallister (1931) eloquently says, then, Dewey reiterated the Pestalozzian

dictum: "Life educates" (p. 432). And for this Dewey wanted the school to be "a miniature community, an embryonic society" (Rockefeller, 1991, p. 250) where everyone has his/her own place and work, and thereby can develop the social self through the perception of connections. In this regard, Dewey rejected the traditional view of the school as the place

> [w]here certain information is to be given, where certain lessons are to be learned, or where certain habits are to be formed. The value of these is conceived as lying largely in the remote future; the child must do these things for the sake of something else he is to do; they are mere preparation. As a result they do not become a part of the life experience of the child and so are not truly educative (Dewey, 1897a, p. 88).

In pointed contrast to this, Dewey shed a warm light on the democratic idea of school community—everyone has a legitimate moral claim for his/her life-experience. True to his usual forbearance, he disdained the inherited liberal notion that some individuals have priority over others:

> A kind of moral equality is consistent with the natural condition of mankind. This means that you have no right to exploit me and I have none to exploit you. It means that both your claims and mine are equally entitled to a hearing. Such equality demands a certain impartiality (Gouinlock, 1986, p. 66).

Thus considered, it is only proper to (re)organize the school as a democratic

society in which the inter-subjective moral agreement regarding the person's moral values or rights can be reached. And it is this moral pluralism that is at the heart of Dewey's contribution to today's education.

E. The Tripod of Education: The Individual, Society, and Nature

In these two chapters, I have focused on classical liberal tradition and social-democratic tradition as supplying two different philosophic foundations for the Seventh National Curriculum. My unified reading of Locke, Smith, and Mill in chapter II, on one hand, was a theoretical attempt to justify the neo-liberal economic forces found in the present Korean school curriculum from the classical liberal perspective of education. In their specific ways each one of these thinkers helped us to understand some of the central themes of the new curriculum. First, I have shown how Locke's idea of natural rights—humans are by birth free and rational—evaluates education as the individually differentiated process which occupies a place at the centre of the organization and implementation of current Korean school curriculum. Then, I have examined Smith's *laissez-faire* economic philosophy highlighting his liberal dictum that 'each individual is the best arbiter of his [sic] own interests.' The examination of this has allowed me to shed light upon the human capital concept and competitive individualism which are the

two main features of the Seventh National Curriculum. Finally, I have discussed Mill's ideal of individuality in favour of student-choice right in education. The purpose of this discussion was to show how Mill's romantic and utilitarian eulogy of individual freedom supports the free self culture of the neo-liberal classroom.

In contrast, in chapter III, I have sought to make a social-democratic critique of the Seventh National Curriculum concentration on Marx's concept of alienation and Dewey's notion of democracy. As I have shown at the first half of chapter III, at the core of Marx's critique lies the problem of alienation which is implicit of the instrumental elitism or functionalism of contemporary Korean school curriculum. In keeping with this defect, I have charged the Seventh National Curriculum with ignoring the de-humanizing effects of modern capitalist schooling. Having made this point, my critical evaluation of the present Korean school curriculum has credited Dewey with understanding the school as a democratic community that serves the best interests of the common people. Thus, bringing light to the meaning of education in a democratic society, Dewey's vision of school democracy has shown how the present Korean public school curriculum reduces education at the service of a few school elite and thereby limits the democratic cause of schooling.

Given the dual interpretation of the Seventh National Curriculum, I am now in a

position to see liberal-individualist and social-democratic values as converging on the moral values of Confucianism. As it will be revealed by chapters IV and V, Confucian ideal of 'becoming a sage' (i.e., a genuine human being) calls the traditional liberal concept of self-development into question, taking seriously the important role played by social context in understanding the way humans actually grow and flourish. In addition, the Confucian sense of self as connected to the community in which one is a member lends new support to those who are critically aware of "the link between self, society, and the large environment" (Houser & Kuzmic, 2001, p. 453). They argue that humanity must represent something more than the socially supported democratic society, constrained by the ecological demand of human life—achieving human perfection in harmony with the universe. It is only in this new human perspective of Confucianism, emphasizing the harmonious and peaceful relationships between humans and between human and nature, that in what follows I will take up the issue of how T'oegye's self-cultivation theory based on the practice of *kyŏng* represents of the moral teachings of East Asian Confucian tradition with a special reference to its implications for education.

Chapter IV.

New Perspective: T'oegye's Neo-Confucian Vision

It is Confucianism that brings the three nations of East Asia (i.e., China, Korea, and Japan) into one cultural group (Lee, 1978). But it was more through the later Confucianism, called neo-Confucianism, than classical Confucianism in ancient China that a common Confucian value system was firmly established in the East Asia region.

Neo-Confucianism refers to the new school of Confucian philosophy started in Sung China around the eleventh century. It was distinguished from the classical Confucianism of Confucius and Mencius by a strong metaphysical assertion of the Confucian tradition, while retaining the orthodox ethical and political teachings of Confucianism (Göthel, 1992). Neo-Confucianism was formed in an effort to make more rational and to deepen, on the basis of metaphysics, Confucianism's original ethical point of view.

Among the great neo-Confucian masters of Sung China, Chu Hsi was of primary importance, first because he systematized all the existing Confucian doctrines, and second, and more importantly, his Confucian heritage was a true inspiration for the development of an orthodox Confucianism in East Asia, which Yi Korea, not Chu Hsi's

followers in Yuan-Ming China, has successfully put into practice.

In this respect, Yi Korea, following the Chu Hsi orthodoxy, played a significant role in shaping the Confucian identity in East Asia, and it was T'oegye as "the authentic inheritor of Chu Hsi" who became the spiritual and philosophical linkage between the above three nations in the region (Tu, 1982, p. 4).

With regard to T'oegye's contribution to the cultural unity of East Asia, three things deserve our attention. T'oegye first arranged and synthesized historically and theoretically the neo-Confucianism of Sung, Yuan, and Ming periods. It was T'oegye who introduced the neo-Confucian teaching of the Sung masters, particularly Chu Hsi, to Korea and led the intellectual flourishing of neo-Confucianism in the Yi dynasty (Göthel, 1992). Finally, T'oegye had a great influence on the development of neo-Confucianism in Japan during the Tokugawa period while disseminating his neo-Confucian doctrine to Japanese Confucian scholars (Pak, 1983; Choi, 1978).

Considering T'oegy's historical role in the development of East Asia Confucianism,[14] then, it is not so far fetched to say that a close reading of T'oegye's philosophy, the best neo-Confucian mind after Chu Hsi, may help us understand the worth and value of East Asian Confucian culture upon which the truly human way of

[14] See Ryūtarō (1985), p. 243.

living is possible.

Driven by this historical perspective, this chapter is an attempt to explore T'oegye's neo-Confucian thought and its implications for today's curriculum designers. First of all, however, I will offer a brief sketch of his life which was itself a conscious effort to put his philosophical teaching into practice.

A. T'oegye as a Person[15]

Yi Hwang, better known by his honorific name T'oegye was born in the small country town of Onkyeri, near the modern city of Andong of Kyeongsang Province, Korea on November 15, 1501—the seventh year of the reign of King Yŏnsan of the Yi dynasty. Though born into a family that was not well-off, he was surrounded with a scholarly atmosphere. His father Yi Sik was a *chinsa*, a title conferred on a scholar who passed the civil service examination in the literary department. His uncle Yi U was also a Confucian scholar who had held the posts of Andong magistrate and Gangwon governor.

To this younger brother of his father, T'oegye was indebted for his early learning; because his father died when he was only seven years old, and after that it was solely

[15] The sources of biographical information upon which I rely are Yun (1990), pp. 1-24; Kalton (1988), pp. 26-30; T'oegye (1988), pp. 14-19; Pak (1983); Choi (1978); and Smith (1978). The full references will be found in the bibliography at the end.

under his uncle's guidance and influence that he learned the *Analects*, and from there realized what the true method and goal of study was. At the age of nineteen he read the *Complete Collection of Neo-Confucian Metaphysics*, finding himself in a process of great awakening. It is well known that when he read the *Book of Changes* at the age of twenty, T'oegye was so fervent in his studies that he often neglected to eat and sleep. The result was a digestive disorder that troubled him throughout his life.

By the time he was twenty-three, T'oegye studied at the National Academy in Seoul. While staying in Seoul, he experienced himself the debilitating effects of the literati purges on the minds of the Confucian students, yet the main event of this period was that he was impressed deeply by his reading of *Simgyong Puju* (The Heart Classic, Supplemented and Annotated), which opened up to him the way toward the learning of mind-and-heart, i.e., the practice of *kyŏng* that was key to his moral philosophy.

After passing the higher civil service examination in March, 1535, the thirty-four-year-old T'oegye finally began his career as a government official. But, it is important to note that he was only forced to undergo the government examination and obtain a government position by the destitution of his family, by the old age of his mother, and by exhortation of his friends. T'oegye was not really that interested in government service. This is evident from the fact that he tried to retreat to his place of birth three times (when

he was 42, 45, and 49 years old), only to be summoned back into service each time. Renouncing his position in office and dwelling in retirement was not a matter that he could control.

Why was T'oegye continually trying to get out of official posts? First, by birth T'oegye was disgusted at earning his livelihood by obtaining a government position through the civil service examination. His natural inclination was rather to be like a hermit who is satisfied with a simple, peaceful unity with nature. Added to his natural unsuitability for official life, T'oegye's lifelong passion for learning may well explain his eagerness to leave office and live in retirement, devoting himself to study and self-cultivation. Rather introspective and quiet by temperament, he was born to a scholar who lived in the earnest pursuit of learning.

Meanwhile, T'oegye's resolve to resign from service in public life was made stronger by the death of his elder brother Hae in the purge of 1545. Generally speaking, more than half of T'oegye's life was spent in what is known as the period of 'the literati purges' (*sahwa*), and in such an unpleasant political climate of the times under which the channels of communication for upright officials were blocked, it was not surprising that he preferred a life of quiet and peaceful retirement.

At age forty-seven, as a plan to move into full retirement, T'oegye had volunteered

for provincial appointments. But, it was during his period as magistrate of P'unggi county in 1548-1549 that his significant contribution to the development of education and literary academies in Korea was made. It was then that he petitioned the court to grant a royal charter to the *Paegundong sŏwon* (the first Literary Academy in Korea founded in 1543) within his jurisdiction. His petition was granted, and with this official recognition of the government private literary academies multiplied rapidly throughout the Korean peninsula. T'oegye's accomplishment had great consequences, for the literary academy as a rural private school played a central role in the growth and development of Korean Confucianism until the late-nineteenth century.

In 1549, he finally left his post and settled down in his birthplace. After this self-directed retreat, T'oegye devoted himself to teaching his students. As such, his remaining days were happily dedicated to the scholarly leisure and the simple joy of the country life. T'oegye died in 1570, and, according to his disciples, he continued his studies and teaching up until the end of his life.

By living example, T'oegye taught us not to move by the worldly success and renown, because in his view the meaning of life does not lie in occupying public office nor garnering material gain, but becoming a true human being through strenuous self-exertion in personal cultivation. This Confucian ideal of human perfection becomes clear

if we examine T'oegye's self-cultivation theory based upon the inner moral transformation of the mind. It is to this Confucian vision of T'oegye that I must now turn.

B. T'oegye's Self-Cultivation Theory

In T'oegye's view, humans are good and evil at the same time. If they follow the heavenly principle of the way (*Do*), i.e. the Four Beginnings (humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom), they can move in the direction of the natural goodness of human nature. In contrast, if they follow the temperamental material of human body, i.e. the Seven Feelings (joy, anger, sorrow, fear, love, hate, and desire), they can degrade into a state of evil. For T'oegye, then, the direction in which human nature is put in motion depends on moral self-cultivation, which is a perennial human concern. And it is in this light that T'oegye emphasized the preservation of the inborn moral qualities of the mind through the practice of *kyŏng*.

Kyŏng as a key concept in the T'oegye's system of thought and important for a deeper understanding of his neo-Confucian concept of self-transformation, which can be variously translated in English as 'reverence,' 'seriousness,' or 'reverential seriousness,' and so on. The *locus classicus* for the idea of *kyŏng* is found in the early Confucian texts

like the *Book of Changes*, the *Book of Rites*, and the *Analects*.[16] T'oegye's view of *kyŏng* was, however, more directly influenced by Chu Hsi's own interpretation of this common term for neo-Confucianism. According to Chu Hsi, *kyŏng* means "inner mental attentiveness," living seriously with an intense concentration on the matter at hand (Chu Hsi, 1990, p. 119). It was adapted by T'oegye, who has spoken of *kyŏng* as "an alert and faithful state of mind" by concentrating one's consciousness (T'oegye, 1958, Vol. 1, p. 824).[17] Kalton (1988) further explains the kind of seriousness signified by T'oegye's *kyŏng*:

> Seriousness in the sense meant here is . . . the attitude that assumes every time and place has significance, a message to guide and inform each response. . . . Thus T'oegye's *kyŏng* involved developing a profound sense of reverence for the Ultimate in everyday life. In the interaction with family, friends, and others in the ordinary situations of daily life we fulfill the purpose and meaning of our existence. . . . If every situation involves something significant and worthy of reverence, then one needs to concentrate one's attention to make the mind focus on the event at hand. This is the aspect of *kyŏng* described as "mindfulness" (pp. 11-12).

Here a question arises: How can we cultivate a constantly focused and alert mind? The approach favoured by T'oegye centred on a discipline called *kyŏnghak* (the learning of reverential seriousness) which, according to Chung's (1992a) analysis, contains the

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[16] For details, see Chung (1992a), p. 62.
[17] For this translation, see Y[o]un (1985a), p. 231.

following four aspects:

> [F]irst, regulate the external through the disciplined observation of the rules of propriety in order to cultivate the internal; second, be serious in handling things with "caution and apprehension" and be reverent to others; third, maintain a concentrated, self-possessed state of mind by "concentrating on one thing without departing from it; and fourth, preserve the internal "refined and single-minded" state (pp. 63-64).

To be sure, it is a difficult practice to keep a wandering mind concentrated on whatever task is at hand. But T'oegye asserted that "one can learn to collect consciousness into state of profound quiet" by means of "a meditative form of mindfulness called 'quiet sitting'" (Kalton, 1988, p. 13). It is conscious, artificial effort to overcome the hindrance of external circumstantial forces and thus get one's "inner self-transformation" (Tu, 1978, p. 465). T'oegye's method of sitting silently for experiencing *kyŏng* as the heaven's mind before the human's emotions are aroused is expressed in the passage below:

> When the mind is tranquil, the superior man preserves and nourishes its "substance." When feelings and intentions are aroused, one examines and corrects oneself and rectifies their usefulness. If one does not take *kyŏng* to be the first principle of learning, how can one establish the original mind? Hence, before the mind is aroused, the learning of the superior men is to take *kyŏng* as the first principle and to give full effort to "preserving and nourishing." After the mind is aroused, it is to give full effort to self-examination and self-correction. This is the reason why the *kyŏnghak* completes the beginning and the end

(T'oegye, 1986, Vol. 3, p. 144).[18]

Central to this meditative practice is *shimhak* (the learning of the mind-and-heart), which is none other than the exercise of "suppressing selfish human desires" and "preserving [the] heavenly principle" (T'oegye, 1986, Vol. 2, p. 259).[19] It has already been mentioned that T'oegye's perception of human nature is morally indeterminate, because, as Kim (2002) points out, he believed "humans are in the process of *becoming* rather than *existing* as a fixed substance, and they must control their selfishness and cultivate natural goodness" to realize their full human potential. In other words, everyone's "[h]uman nature is similar at birth, but becomes selfish or ethical depending on cultivation and practice (p. 110). It is in this sense that inner moral cultivation takes on a particular significance for our understanding of T'oegye's human project, the goal of which lies in "the transformation of the selfish desires of the petty human mind into an all-embracing impartiality of the mind of the way or the heavenly principle" (Tu, 1978, p. 462).

Again, the learning of the mind-and-heart, in T'oegye's opinion, begins with *kyŏng*, for only when one is always alert, prudent, even afraid on everything one can "recognize

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[18] For this translation, see Chung (1992a), p. 65.
[19] For this translation, see Chung (1992a), p. 64.

the distinction between heaven's principle and human desire" (Y[o]un, 1985a, p. 231). In this respect, it can be asserted that the main thrust of T'oegye's theory of moral transformation is to detect *kyŏng* with which the learning of the mind-and-heart unfolds. The reason is simple: "*kyŏng* is what provides the basis that self-cultivation is possible" (Chung, 1992a, p. 67).

At this point it is certain that T'oegye's main concern is to realize the heavenly goodness of human nature through attaining the master of the mind. This means cultivating a contemplative and inner-directed way of *kyŏng*. Therefore, in *Sŏnghaksipto* (The Ten Diagrams on Sage Learning, 1568), which is his most important work in ethics, T'oegye proclaimed that *kyŏng* is the first principle of learning:

> One should personally experience and get a taste of its [*kyŏng*'s] meaning, cautioning oneself and using it for self-reflection in the course of daily life and in whatever comes to mind. If one assimilates it in this way, he will never doubt but that "mindfulness [*kyŏng*]" constitutes the beginning and the end of sage learning (T'oegye, 1988/1568, p. 180).

Whereas learning begins with the practice of *kyŏng*, the end is to become truly human (See Tu, 1978; Phelan, 1978). And, to T'oegye, "to be fully human is to relate to others in a life-giving way" (Kalton, 1988, p. 7). In this regard, T'oegye emphasized a traditional Confucian virtue which signifies the proper human relationship: It is called *yin*.

It is common knowledge that Confucianism regards the *yin* as the supreme moral principle making human kin with others and thus the ultimate goal of study. *yin*, whose Chinese character is a composite of two characters for 'human' and 'two,' literally meaning "two persons together.' But, as Kalton (1988) observes, in the later Confucian tradition to which T'oegye himself belonged, "*yin* came to be interpreted mainly in terms of warm human fellow-feeling, or love in its nonsexual sense" (p. 143). T'oegye, therefore, in his *Sŏnghaksipto* taught us to love others, that is, to cultivate the kind of warm feelings associated with *yin*:

> By honoring those who are advanced in years, I carry out the respect for age which due my aged, and by kindness to the solitary and weak, I carry out the tender care for the young which should be paid to my young. The Sage is at one with the character [of heaven and Earth], and the wise man is of their finest. All persons in the world who are exhausted, decrepit, worn out, or ill, or who are brotherless, childless, widowers, or widowed, are my own brothers who have become helpless and have none to whom they can appeal. . . . [T]he learning of the sages consists in the seeking of humanity [*yin*]. It is necessary to deeply inculcate in oneself the intention [of becoming humane], and then understand that one makes up a single body with Heaven and Earth and the myriad creatures. To truly and actually live this way is what is involved in becoming humane. . . . [A]nd the inner dispositions of his mind and heart will thus become perfect and complete. . . . [I]t is the substance of humanity [*yin*] (T'oegye, 1988, pp. 51-52, 57-58).

To T'oegye, then, "*Jen* [*Yin*] signifies a reciprocated love between men, as humaneness without love could not exist" (Burov, 1992, p. 383). And, as a method of

seeking *yin*, he once again drew attention to the inner practice of mindfulness (i.e., *kyŏng*) in everyday life, without which his ideal of the fullest human development based on human-heartedness is not possible. No doubt it is a moral situation calculated to be always "alert and careful even for a moment" chiefly "to maintain and nurture the natural human goodness or the righteous state of mind" (Kim, 2002, pp. 112-113). To be plain, conscious effort will be required to realize the sort of good human nature held by Mencius,[20] preventing human being from falling into evil (See Y[o]un, 1985b).

Admonishing such moral connection between humans, T'oegye proceeded to inquire the proper relationship between human and nature. According to T'oegye, humans are not essentially in conflict but in harmony with the world and nature, and for that reason their original relationship with nature should be restored. This understanding entails his neo-Confucian cosmology whose "formulations rested on the fundamental concept of the inextricable integration of the microcosm with the macrocosm or the interrelatedness of the trinity of heaven, earth, and man" (Phelan, 1978, p. 453). Phelan (1978) further comments concerning T'oegye's view of an organic cosmos: "[r]ather than an ebbing away of the self in the stillness of Nirvana, what was postulated was the

[20] Mencius believed in the original goodness of human nature. Mencius' famous example of "a child going astray into a well" is as follows: "Suppose a man were, all of a sudden, to see a young child on the verge of falling into a well. He would certainly be moved to compassion, not because he wanted to get in the good graces of the parents, nor because he wished to win the praise of his fellow villagers or friends, nor yet

possibility of a harmonious interaction within the polarities of existence leading to an ultimately fulfilling integration within the cosmic process" (p. 452). As Yun (1990) argues, then, T'oegye based his value theory on his cosmology while giving moral meaning to "the union of man with nature" (p. 228). A rapid survey of some of his simple songs will suffice to represent this relationship:

Twilight haze is my house; Wind and moon are my friends.

In an age of peace, I sicken into old age.

In all this I have but one wish, That I be free from fault (*Sijo*).[21]

The dewy grass softly, softly encloses the water

Of a small pond, fresh and clean without a speck.

The pond is meant to mirror flying clouds and birds,

But I fear that swallows at times break its surface (*On a Pond in Spring*).[22]

Going out in the morning, I stoop to hear the stream;

Returning at dusk, I look up at the blue mountains.

Thus I spend mornings and evenings with mountains and waters,

Mountains like blue screens and waters like clear mirrors.

In the mountains, I wish to dwell as a crane in the clouds,

By the waters, to drift as a gull over the waves.

Wondering if official service hasn't wrecked my life,

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because he disliked the cry of the child" (Mencius, 1970/c. 300 B.C., p. 82).

[21] This is found in *Korea Journal* (1985b), 25(7), 70.

[22] See Kim (1987), p. 64.

I make bold to boast that I linger in a spirit land (*On Horseback*).[23]

These lines, in which T'oegye's belief that full harmony with nature is possible, express how much he praised a life in accordance with nature (Yun, 1990, pp. 229, 238). And, in this connection, T'oegye, who stressed of relating to others in a life-giving way through the full realization of the Confucian virtue/*yin* (which is itself a disposition of loving and giving life to other creatures), now sought to create a new Confucian personality who perceives the world of nature as one's living space from which one directly gets one's essence and in which one is engaged in self-perfection, that is, achieves "his [sic] internal transformation, assimilation of his [sic] inner world to nature and environment" (Anosova, 1992, p. 391, see also pp. 385, 390). T'oegye's attempt to recover the lost unity with nature then starts with the rejection of the view of confrontation between humans and nature, and ideally ends when "a person with a clear and perceptive mind and a lofty and profound heart is conjoined with nature as a moment of gentle breeze and rain-washed moon" (T'oegye, 1985, Vol. 1, 36:19a).[24]

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[23] *Ibid.*, p. 65.
[24] For this translation, see Yun (1990), p. 238.

C. Unity of Knowing and Acting

Turning to another point, one of the most striking features of T'oegye's philosophy is his insistence on "the unity of knowing and acting" (Ryūtarō, 1985, p. 256). Having conceived learning in this fashion, he characterized the relationship between knowledge and conduct as inseparable and even cooperative because as Confucius teaches "practice without thinking is ignorant, and thinking without practice is dangerous" (Confucius, 1992/c. 500 B.C., p. 18).[25] T'oegye's firm conviction that "learning should combine speculation with practice" is also applicable to his lifelong devotion to *kyŏng*, whose "real actualization in everyday life," as noted earlier, is needed to achieve his humanistic project based on *yin* (Choi, 1978, p. 78). In this connection, T'oegy tried himself to practice *kyŏng* throughout his life while considering "sincerity [*kyŏng* or alert mind] as the fundamental force enabling knowledge and conduct to cooperate with each other" (Pak, 1983, p. 91). T'oegye's own practice of *kyŏng*, keeping his mind concentrated, investigating principles, and meditating with an open mind is expressed in his *Tosan'gi*, which he wrote at the age of sixty-one:

> In a quiet room, with piles of books by the four walls, I sit silently at a reading desk and keep my mind concentrated and investigate [principles]. Whenever I understand a problem, I

[25] For this translation, see Choi (1978), p. 78.

> forget about eating out of the joy of learning. When I do not understand it, I consult with a friend, and when I still cannot understand it, I exert myself further. But if I cannot understand it in a natural unforced manner, then I set aside the problem for a while and pick it up again later, reflecting on it with an open (empty) mind, and wait for the problem to be solved naturally (T'oegye, 1971, 1:101).[26]

Very likely, then, the greatness of T'oegye does not lie only in his theoretical depth, but also in his sincere effort to put into practice what he knows. With such a practical mentality, T'oegye further proposed a social reform plan: according to him, a good community is "a happy, well-ordered village in which the poor, the old and the sick were relieved" (Choi, 1978, p. 79). To achieve this, T'oegye gave his favour to a human-hearted person who, as a practical being, pursues the Confucian virtue *yin* in one's activities. This recalls the second chapter of his *Sŏnghaksipto*, where he developed "the idea of getting rid of the suffering of the people or of helping the unfortunate" as the basis of the good organization of the society (Yun, 1990, p. 253). Seen in this light, we may notice that T'oegye's ideal of social betterment depends on moral betterment. Furthermore, his project for moral improvement to revitalize community life requires the practical development of an ethical sensibility toward the suffering of the people.

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[26] For this translation, see Ryūtarō (1985), pp. 256-257.

D. T'oegye's Contribution to Curriculum Thinking

The problem that remains is to reconstruct T'oegye's moral philosophy in relation to the contemporary Korean school curriculum. Again, I begin by talking of his view of human nature. T'oegye was critically aware that "even though human nature is potentially and originally good, there is no ontological guarantee that the moral propensity inherent in the mind will necessarily reveal itself" (Tu, 1985b, p. 274). In keeping with this indeterminate condition of the mind, T'oegye tried to realize the original goodness of human nature. The way of T'oegye's inner moral cultivation was to preserve the mind and nourish human nature by means of holding fast to *kyŏng*, which is, in his view, mental self-examination and self-correction.

In a like manner, T'oegye wanted to suppress one's material nature (i.e., selfish desires) and transform it into "an all-embracing impartiality of the mind" (Tu, 1978, p. 462). Since selfish desires arise when the mind fails to control them, according to T'oegye, "they must be properly channeled" first to prevent human beings blinded by greed from falling into the status of animal and then to recover the genuine endowment of human nature (Tu, 1985a, p. 29). To put it in another way, "as soon as selfish desires are transformed, the Heavenly Mind will naturally manifest itself in one's ordinary daily existence" (Tu, 1978, p. 462). No doubt, this is compatible with Confucius' teaching in

the *Analects*: "To master oneself and return to propriety is humanity" (Confucius, 1992, p. 168).[27]

From the methodological standpoint, on the other hand, T'oegye saw "actual practice of meditation (quiet sitting) as a profound way of experiencing the mind-in-itself before feelings are aroused" (Chung, 1992b, p. 361). T'oegye's ideal of authentic selfhood, then, must be realized internally or contemplatively in the mind, "not through one's rational reasoning or theoretical speculation" (Chung, 1992a, p. 65). In this connection, some commentators identify T'oegye's neo-Confucian thought as "a philosophy of inner life and moral subjectivity" while putting his religious quest for single-mindedness into focus (Tu, 1978, p. 466: also see Chung, 1992a, b).

Upon analysis, T'oegye's meditative thinking to cultivate the self-possessed state of the mind is suggestive to the Seventh National Curriculum, whose utilitarian techniques stressing the external efficiency or effectiveness in education make it difficult to perceive the existential nature and intrinsic process of learning: that is, "learning is for the sake of one's self" (T'oegye, 1958, Vol. 2, p. 799).[28] At the same time, T'oegye's learning of the mind-and-heart teaches us that the educational ideal of self-development or self-perfection "must be obtained through subjective experience and introspection, not by

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[27] For this translation, see Chan (1985), p. 299.

theoretical or intellectual grasping" (Choi, 1978, p. 74). Explicit in such an observation is that the present Korean school curriculum cannot avail itself with T'oegye's intuitive lesson of a self-reflected life while creating a competitive market environment under which the student fails to keep "the mind in a state of tranquility and motionlessness" (Tu, 1978, p. 457).

In the meantime, T'oegye's inner self-transformation is closely related to his moral idealism that depends on the innate ethical qualities of human beings. T'oegye's self-cultivation theory is aimed at becoming a morally accomplished person who should suppress one's inhumane tendencies, which are prevalent in the ego-centred selfish desires. Equally, it may well be said that T'oegye's main question was "how to become a more fully developed human being" (Kalton, 1988, p. 3). Wrestling with this problem he proclaimed that to be human in the deepest sense is to "overcome personal interest" and "develop moral sensibility toward the epiphany of the other" (Kim, 2002, p. 99). It is, then, not difficult to see that in line with developing "the transcendental ego," so to say, T'oegye's acceptance of the other is an attempt to reach "a state of harmony" on which "human relations, i.e., I and the other, can find their place and form ethical relations" (Asanuma, 2003, p. 1; Kim, 2002, p. 108). And, as a typical neo-Confucian thinker who

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[28] For this translation, see Tu (1978), p. 465.

"presuppose[s] an organic interrelation and responsiveness among beings" T'oegye found "the meaning and fullness of humanity" in proper interpersonal relationships (Kalton, 1988, pp. 7-8).

T'oegye's acknowledgement of the existence of the other naturally leads us to the question, how to teach the student to "tak[e] position of watching the self from the other's point of view" (Asanuma, 2003, p. 11); More specifically, the need to ask to what extent the Seventh National Curriculum is "sensible of the epiphany, the voice, the delicate trembling and pain of the other" (Kim, 2002, p. 104). Yet, appearing as it does, the new curriculum is combined with producing an air of indifference towards the misfortune and suffering of the other. In the same way, one is compelled to take note that the present Korean school curriculum does not concern itself with creating the otherness inside the self. Two reasons stand out: First, it considers the student as a rational, self-seeking market agent, and second, the liberal ideal of individuality is taken to be the ethical norm in the school.

Conversely, T'oegye's thought in relation to the wholeness and interdependence of human relationships can provide a chance to see the self-sufficient educational process of modern schooling in a different way, since his teaching regarding the self-other relationship implicates the feeling of necessity to tie with the other on the ground that

"one's humanity is achieved only when and through others" (Kalton, 1988, p. 6). In this respect, T'oegye's contribution to the curriculum thinking is that it suggests that the school should be the place where one can experience otherness, realize one's connected existence, and develop a sense of belonging as the fertile meaning of our life. Given this view, as Asanuma (2003, p. 13) demonstrates, "it is important for the curriculum makers to employ the otherness in the conceptualization of the curriculum-making." As such, I think it is critically required for the Korean curriculum makers to be aware of what kind of educational experience is essential for "the creation of otherness in one's ego monad" (Asanuma, 2003, p. 11). To be sure, it begins with discarding egocentrism, which requires listening to the other's voice, appeals, and commends while suppressing selfish intentions and greed.

Another conspicuous feature of T'oegye's system of thought is his attempt to bridge the inner world of the human and the outer world of nature. At one level, his quest for harmony with nature is proof of T'oegye's desire that he wanted to live in tranquility with nature, with the result that his desire brought him into close relationship with nature and his environment. However, the question at issue here is his neo-Confucian thought that the inner self-transformation is possible through direct contemplation and aesthetic perception of the outer world of nature. In other words, as Anosova (1992) stresses,

Confucian personality can get one's source for self-realization directly from nature while experiencing the greatness of the universe and feeling the sensation of thoughtlessness and freedom unknown in ordinary life.

In all of this it should be amply clear why T'oegye was always intent on "leav[ing] his service, go[ing] to the forest or the mountains, [waiting to] be engaged in self-perfection, and at the same time remain himself, keep calm and not be concerned about the government" (Anosova, 1992, p. 387). Hence, it is not surprising that, T'oegye, in his late fifties, lamented that he had spent the past (from his late thirties to early fifties) as an official in government. Otherwise, he would have buried himself in nature and devoted himself to the pursuit of learning, finding his pleasure in all the creatures of the world (See Yun, 1990, p. 238).

Returning to the educational question, what T'oegye's effort to be in conformity with nature allows us to see is that the student must be taught to be a person of ecological mind who lives in peaceful coexistence with nature. It should be explained, perhaps, that today's ecological crisis stems from modern scientific thinking whose self-autonomous, rational, and goal-directed methodology regards nature as 'the site of human desire,' not as 'being by itself' (See Oh & Lee, 2003). Very different, however, is the Confucian view that nature is seen as "an object which man is to adjust himself [sic] to and be in harmony

with" (Y[o]un, 1985a, p. 240). In this way, neo-Confucians like T'oegye "sought with a sincere and humble attitude for a harmonious union with the actual nature" (Y[o]un, 1985a, p. 240). This Confucian relationship toward nature is of great incidental interest from the perspective of ecological responsibility in education. This is matched by increasing public concern to find ways of overcoming the modernist paradigm of homocentrism and returning humanity to its proper place in the universe. It is in this 'green' context that we should rethink the ethical ground of the market imperative to approach "nature from the aspect of increasing the possibility of utilization, put[ting] mankind itself in threat of ecological crisis" (Oh & Lee, 2003, p. 6).

Finally, a focus on practical living characterizes T'oegye's philosophy. Like other neo-Confucian thinkers, T'oegye was deeply interested in the matter of knowledge and conduct. But, dealing with the key issue in Confucianism, his main concern was not Mencius' question of 'which comes first, knowledge or conduct.' The reason is simple: Mencius' rational rhetoric of 'knowledge first and conduct second' can be easily dismissed by the experimental statement that "we do not act only after we have all knowledge, nor do we have knowledge only after we have done everything" (Choi, 1978, p. 76). T'oegye also opposed Wang Yang-Ming's theory of the oneness of knowing and acting on the ground that knowledge and conduct are only united in the emotional side of

human mind, but not on the rational side:

> The mind appears instinctively in feeling, and knowledge exists in conduct, though one does not make the effort to learn. But it is different for the mind in a moral sense. Without study, nothing can be learned and without effort, no conduct can be carried out in the moral sense. In conduct, if one does not have a sincere heart, one can not know the truth, and even if one knew the truth, one could not put it into practice. Therefore, knowledge and conduct in the moral sense wait upon each other. They are always together (T'oegye, 1971, 2:334).[29]

For his turn, aware that knowledge and conduct are parallel and complementary as 'the wings of a bird or the wheels of a cart,' T'oegye consciously sought to teach *kyŏng* in the ordinary situations of daily life. To him, this heightened state of self-awareness as the core of learning and self-cultivation is "the fundamental force enabling knowledge and conduct to cooperate with each other" (Pak, 1983, p. 91). T'oegye's purpose was then to practice *kyŏng* in daily human experience and reach the combination of knowledge and conduct.

The lessons of T'oegye's practice of *kyŏng* on curriculum makers are manifold. First, it allows them to look more practically at learning, because T'oegye's perception of "the mind as a lived reality" (Tu, 1985b, p. 267) implies that learning is a practical art, the aim of which is to influence conduct. Further, with the relationship of knowing and

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[29] For this translation, see Choi (1978), p. 75.

acting T'oegye's practical self-cultivation indicates that "knowing and conduct should assist each other, as the right and left leg do in walking" (Pak, 1983, p. 82). Finally, the idea that "*kyŏng* is the foundation of all knowledge and action" (Chung, 1992a, p. 65) stresses that the main task of education is to cultivate 'a constantly focused and alert mind' (i.e., *kyŏng*) and through the practice of it achieve 'the genuine nature of humankind' (i.e., *yin*).

In summary, T'oegye's Confucian pedagogy is framed within the four major characteristics as follows: (1) Moral mind for ethical living; (2) Public mind for harmonious living with others; (3) Ecological mind for peaceful unity with nature; and (4) Practical mind for lived experience. Taken together, these points can explain why the present Korean school curriculum, driven by a global market discourse informed by neo-liberal globalization, is so vulnerable to the humane context in which "we learn to be human in the fullest sense of the term" while underestimating the deep inner side of human nature and its outer "sensitivity toward all things" (Tu, 1985a, p. 30; Selover, 2005, p. 52). This fact will be also clear when we consider that the neo-liberal turn of Korean society since the late-1990s is making the school the place where beings as market agents, rather than human beings, are produced and activated. Given that, I turn my attention to T'oegye's reverence for human beings, because, as noted above, his

primary concern was always to educate humans as human beings. With this understanding of T'oegye's philosophy as a foundation, I am now in a position to consider Confucianism in general as a new paradigm for the twenty-first century education, which will be the focus of the following chapter.

Chapter V.

Beyond The Neo-Liberalist Model of Education:

Confucian Alternative

Although the history of Confucianism in Korea is long, encompassing much of Korea's written history, nevertheless, it was only after the fifteenth century, when Yi Korea adopted Confucianism as an organized political/social ideology, that the main stream of Korean culture was rooted in the soil of Confucianism (Haboush, 1991). Since then, Confucian values and norms have continued to influence Koreans over the centuries while helping shape behaviour and social organization in Korea.

Things began to change in the late-nineteenth century when Korea was faced with the task of protecting her national identity against the threat of the imperialist forces competing in East Asia. Korea launched a massive-scale reform to transform an age-old Confucian system into a modernized one that was patterned on Western models. This reform resulted in the end of Confucianism as the formal state ideology and heralded the beginning of the Western restructuring of Korean society.

Since the epoch-making break from the centuries of Confucianism, Korea has been in the continuing process of Westernization through the twentieth century. Westernization

in Korea, however, developed in complex association with the traditional Confucian culture. Because Confucian values, although in altered form, remain alive in the background of a vastly changed Korean society, in the modern age "[Koreans] are confronted with a confusion in values and an ongoing conflict between tradition and modernity" (Keum, 2000, p. 21).

This tension between a modern system of values influenced by the West and the values of traditional Confucianism tends to be strong in the twentieth and twenty-first century Korea, which is under the sway of the Western global-market project. On one hand, it is probably true that the traditional Confucian code of ethics is a barrier to the increase of productivity, rationality, and efficiency, which are the criteria of human relations in the neo-liberal market world. On the other hand, however, it is the Confucian sense of humanity based on moral relations within a universal context that can prevent humans from becoming enslaved to the market perspective.

It is an open question whether Confucianism as a living tradition will be able to function in contemporary Korean society. Nonetheless, Confucian moral philosophy can offer an insight into the danger of today's global market society, in which "the individual is confronted with the hazards of self-destruction brought upon by the dehumanizing climate of rational and productive social systems and economies" (Keum, 2000, p. 28).

Within this redefinition of Confucian values in the context of contemporary society, I have reviewed T'oegye's philosophy as a possible Confucian answer to the neo-liberal restructuring of life and education. In this final chapter, I shall continue to discuss the Confucian response to the market civilization while focusing on the classical Confucian teachings found in the *Analects*. The order in which I propose to carry out my enquiry is as follows. I shall first critically review the effects of neo-liberalism upon education. Having identified the limits of neo-liberalist model of education, then I shall evaluate a Confucian alternative.

A. Understanding Neo-Liberalism

Generally speaking, the project of neo-liberalism is to improve the quality of an economic system on principles of the market and competition. For this neo-liberals emphasize a minimalist, nonintervention ist state or government. Their argument is that the system of active state intervention is the root of economic inefficiency, which is well verified in their critique of welfare nationalism or state capitalism. To promote economic freedom, neo-liberals agree to minimize the role of government. In such a way they "liberate private enterprise from any bonds imposed by the government" (liberalization) and "reduce government regulation of everything that could diminish profits"

(deregulation) (Martinez & Garcia, 1997, p. 2). By the same token, neo-liberals are dedicated to reducing the size of government. They believe that "sustained, large budget deficits are deleterious to economic performance" and "state monopolies in certain industries have stifled competition" which is key to the success of the market economy (Stiglitz, 2001, pp. 25, 35). Therefore, they "cut public expenditure for social services like health care and education" (producing a balanced budget) and "sell state-owned enterprises, goods and services to private investors" (creating privatization) (Martinez & Garcia, 1997, p. 2). The idea is that this kind of 'structural adjustment' would simultaneously improve economic efficiency and reduce fiscal deficits. After all, "the smaller the state the better the state" on the assumption that "governments are worse than markets" (Stiglitz, 2001, p. 40). In this regard, neo-liberals ultimately believe in the corrections of the market, and market forces. Furthermore, they intensify and expand the market. Their final goal is a market transformation of *everything*.

To deepen understanding of the effects of neo-liberalism on education, however, we need to review some of its critical nature: its ideological nature, fundamentalist interpretation, and rational ontology. With respect to the ideological nature of neo-liberalism, according to Marxists, ideology is concerned with promoting the interests of a ruling class and, at the same time, systematically ignoring or repressing the less powerful

members of society (Fletcher, 2000). In this sense, neo-liberalism is purely ideological, for it serves to justify and reproduce the needs of corporate elites and others who belong to the dominant group of society, while oppressing the less privileged class of society such as workers, women, and the poor. Giroux's (2002) critique of the contemporary neo-conservative policies of the United States of America demonstrates this ideological character:

> Instead of addressing the gaps in both public health needs and the safety net for workers, young people, and the poor, President Bush is trying to push through a stimulus plan based primarily on tax breaks for the wealthy and major corporations . . . Investing in children, the environment, and those most in need as well as in crucial public services, once again gives way to investing in the rich and repaying corporate contributors (p. 8).

With respect to fundamentalism, the original meaning designated a set of Christian beliefs and experiences (Castells, 1997). Just as Christian fundamentalists believe in personal salvation through Christ, so neo-liberals believe in "salvation through the advent of free market" (Cox, 1999, p. 18). In this light neo-liberalism is a kind of market fundamentalism, since the market is thought of as an omnipotent God, supposing that free markets will ensure a peaceful, prosperous future for the world. Yet there is no direct evidence that the *laissez-faire* policies will bring about efficiency and growth (Bienefeld,

1994; Stiglitz, 2001; Hirst, 1997). The abilities of the Market God are dubious, because, as Bray (2000) argues, the invisible, magic hand of the free market is not always present. Bienefeld (1994), for example, asserts that the neo-liberal turn of government policies based on the deregulation of markets always harbours the potential danger of socio-economic, political catastrophe:

> The bottom line is that unregulated markets are dangerous, unstable, and ultimately economically inefficient. At the same time, their social and political consequences are both deeply undesirable and ultimately unsustainable (p. 112).

Finally, the neo-liberal form of rationality is, as Gill (1995) indicates, ultimately strategic, and instrumental in that it seeks to find "the best means to achieve calculated ends" (p. 418). Neo-liberals base calculations on the most economical application of means to a given end. It is this cost-minimizing and profit-maximizing production that leads to the exploitation of labour whereby labour productivity could increase (McNally, 2002). But, often against its own wishes, labour exploitation such as cutting wages weakens the consumer ability of workers in the market and ultimately reduces "the final demand of consumer commodities" (O'Connor, 1998, p. 240). This is the inner contradiction of neo-classical economic thinking, for the capitalist accumulation, to be

sure, depends on the ever-growing chain of production and consumption. By the same token, neo-liberals exploit natural sources, chiefly to increase productivity. The result is that the depletion of resources and the environment by the market-driven use for maximizing gain, in turn, constrains expansion (Goldman, 1997). These are the so-called "ecological constraints" of neo-liberalism (Gill, 1995, p. 419). In this context, the neo-liberal premise that sustainable growth is possible through the unlimited resources is an irrational claim, whose self-contradictory nature Daly (1990) endeavours to prove:

> [If] 'to grow' means 'to increase naturally in size by the addition of material through assimilation or accretion,' growth is not sustainable within the Earth ecosystem which is finite, non-growing and materially closed (pp. 45-47).

B. Neo-Liberalism and Education

Now, the question is how the dominant neo-liberal economic thinking affects the educational outlook of our time. It is scarcely surprising that by criticizing the economic inefficiency of the educational system in a Keynsian welfare state, neo-liberals attempt to apply market principles to education provision. Their hypothesis is that large-scale state intervention results in lowering educational quality. Neo-liberals, therefore, insist on leaving education to the invisible hand of the market, i.e., the omnipotent Market God. In

this regard, they object to privatizing and marketizing education.

"Privatization" in education "means making the provision and the quality of education increasingly dependent on private means" (Pring, 1986, p. 65). Privatization is encouraged because parents no longer have confidence in the public educational system. Embodied in parents' lack of trust is the right of parents to purchase education privately. That is, using the language of crisis to persuade people that something needs to be done urgently and criticizing the government's failure to respond to the needs of the "educational consumers," they argue for the right to choose the education they feel is the most suitable for their children (Quicke, 1988). A result is the establishment of a school system that should be more responsive to the demands of the marketplace.

Central to this privatization of education is, then, parental choice, which naturally links to the effort of taking the control and determination of school provision out of the hands of government (and left to the market forces) in order to bring more diversity to education. Moreover, the educational market will heighten competition among schools whose funding is directly related to student enrolment with the reduction of state subsidies. This punctuates the whole idea of school-based management. For schools now will be given direct control of their own budgets. In return, they will be more responsible for employing, hiring, and firing teachers and other staff, as well as the management of

their own school (Ball, 1990). In short, neo-liberal education reform is in pursuit of introducing the market and competition to the field of education, appealing to those who are expecting to have more choices offered to them in terms of quality educational services. In this regard, neo-liberals respect the need of a consumer-oriented education, which is accompanied by greater efficiency. Henales and Edwards (2000) summarize this voucher/market system of education:

> Schools compete for students' enrolment by providing a better quality education. Therefore, in the context of neo-liberal orthodoxy, the most effective school prospers in a market economy, just as any efficient enterprise would. Budget resources are thus assigned to "consumers" (students/parents) rather than to schools, and the students and their parents choose the schools they prefer (page unknown).

Since the late-1970s, history has swung toward the globalization vision of the New Right (Laxer, 1995). The neo-liberal agenda has affected the decision making of social policies around the world. Education policy, as one of the most important social policies, has been influenced by the New Right liberalism, which opened spaces favourable to privatization and marketization of education. The neo-liberal paradigm of education provided the rationale for the government to implement a market-oriented education reform in an effort to make the education sector more effective, efficient, and accountable

to the public, and, at the same time, more responsive to the changing demands of the world.

With the advent of the 1980s and the Thatcher and Reagan administrations, the neo-liberalist model of education developed. Since then, and with the worldwide expansion of neo-liberalism at the end of 1980s, marketization in education has become a global trend, whose ideological tidal wave is today crossing over the world (Chan & Mok, 2001). Despite the fact that the market-oriented education reform enjoys wide currency in the twenty-first century global market society, such a neo-liberal development is not totally successful, in that it fails to draw the universal consensus around market-favored education change. Rather, there are critics who attack the neo-liberal policy of education. Generally, there are three main areas of criticism of the neo-liberalist model of education.

The first is that under the neo-liberal education reform the school becomes a Darwinian marketplace where 'the survival of the fittest' is the rule of life and education is subject to the jungle law of the strong (Bourdieu, 1998; Bienefeld, 1994). This critique focuses on the marginalization or alienation of the majority of students caused by excessive adherence to the disciplinary market way. Convinced that the market restructuring of the school results in deepening the social gap between the strong and the weak in the school, this critique is aimed at the neo-liberal elitist view that the ablest is

the best and competition is the meaning of life (McMurtry, 2001).

A second thesis is that within the neo-liberal classroom, the student is forced to be an instrumental market agent whose value depends upon productivity or the money-nexus in the market (Bacchus, 2002; Treanor, 2002). At the core of the assault is a belief that the educational marketplace, with its stress on external market relations, will damage the inner activity of students, which in fact makes them human. It is alleged to do so through confusing life value with commodity value. And, it is claimed to do so, when neo-liberal reformers do not recognize the fact that the inner life reproduction/growth, not maximum efficiency in human relations, is a more vital condition of human existence.

A third and final thesis is that neo-liberal restructuring of education bears a potential danger of clashing with anti-capitalist educational measures (Pring, 1986). Central to this critique is a belief that the neo-liberal maxim that the market-oriented education is the best to improve the quality of education, is a problematic one. Critics identify two specific reasons: The one is that the taken-for-granted assumption that "market forces are the best way" has little empirical evidence (Ball, 1990, p. 69). The other is that questions such as what quality is, and how it can be measured, are culturally controversial. Nevertheless, neo-liberal educational reformers seek to legitimize the market culture in the classroom, which often leads to 'a politics of cultures,' whereby a

discussion of cultural racism or cognitive imperialism is raised. Battiste (2000) writes:

> Cognitive imperialism, also known as cultural racism, is the imposition of one worldview on a person who has an alternative world view, with the implication that imposed worldview is superior to the alternative worldview (pp. 192-193).

Thus the reorientation of the neo-liberal policy that ultimately leads us in a position to resist the market-driven education change. Interwoven with this, the next section explores a paradigm shift which is suggested by Confucian tradition. In the line of this discussion, the purpose is to show an alternate vision to the individualist, hierarchical, and homocentric neo-liberal world.

C. Lights from Confucianism

According to Smith's (1973) observation, in the *Analects* Confucius is represented as using the term *yin* more than forty times. Equally, Hsu (1966) points out that within the twenty chapters of the present *Analects*, we find no less than fifty-four passages dealing with the subject of *yin* apart from other sporadic references. What is the implication of this observation? *Yin*, serving as the guiding principle for Confucian moral philosophy, is the most important ethical concept which lies at the heart of Confucius's teaching. But

yin, as many commentators agree, is not an easy term to define, while it is very simple in its etymological origin. As indicated in chapter IV (p. 104) the Chinese word *yin* is a composite of the characters for 'human' and 'two,' i.e., two persons together. Kalton's analysis in this light recalls that:

> [*Yin*] is the quality of relating to other persons in a proper, fully human manner, a description that reflects the Confucian conviction that the highest human excellence is cultivated in and manifested by the quality of interpersonal relationships (T'oegye, 1988, p. 143).

Here we find that in Confucianism "the most central understanding of *jen* [*yin*] is in the realm of human relations and interpersonal ties, symbolized by the traditional etymology of 'person' and 'two'" (Selover, 2005, p. 51).

With this borne in mind, we may proceed to examine the methods suggested by Confucius for the attainment of *yin*. In the *Analects*, several possible avenues for promoting the good relationship between humans will be found, beginning with Confucius' emphasis on affection for others. Confucius teaches that right human relations require warm human fellow-feeling. This human and interpersonal feeling involves two virtues: First is what might be called 'loyalty,' i.e., the entire devotion of oneself to the best interests of another. Related to this standard for love towards others is 'reciprocity'—"What you do not wish for yourself, do not impose upon others"

(Confucius, 1997/c. 500 B.C., p. 55), or "What you do not wish for yourself, do not do to others" (Confucius, 1997, p. 77). Loyalty and reciprocity, then, become the means by which we can develop a sort of connectedness with others, because the social gap between self and others can be bridged by putting oneself in the place of others and serving to others with all one's heart, in unfeigned manner.

Experiencing *yin* in interpersonal relations can be further extended by practicing *ui*, which is translated as 'righteousness' or 'justice.' Though in *Analects* loyalty and reciprocity are highly praised as Confucius' two leading precepts, nevertheless, as Smith (1973) asserts, it is *ui* which can guide his action throughout life. In several places in *Analects*, Confucius reveals that his teaching is truly concerned with what is right and fitting, i.e., the pursuit of righteousness. In *Analects* 4:5, for example, Confucius says:

> 'Riches and rank are what every man craves; yet if the only way to obtain them goes against his principles, he should desist from such a pursuit. Poverty and obscurity are what every man hates; yet if the only escape from them goes against his principles, he should accept his lot' (Confucius, 1997, p. 15).

From these passages, it is clear that the righteous person is one who considers not what is expedient but what is just, and when one sees a prospect of profit asks oneself, is it righteousness (See Confucius, 1997, p. 94). Furthermore, Confucius' ideal of

righteousness applies to the responsibility of self toward others as a proper way to deplete the scope and content of egoistic interests; while intending to protect the rights of the people, the greatest well-being and happiness of the people. Hence, Confucius used to say "the good find joy in the mountains" which contains riches in abundance, but the wealth belongs to all (Confucius, 1997, p. 27).

In the achievement of *ui*—the devoid of the egoistic passion for profit—there is another avenue to the Confucian system of interpersonal relations. I mean *ye*. Whereas *ui* means the moral duties, *ye* is more related to social norms. *Ye* is basically a character of rites of sacrifice, but its application to act is used to refer to all the rules of good behaviour. The point here is that human beings need to cultivate good manners and observe the rules of proper conduct, so that they do not exceed what is deemed to be fitting and right in the broad social context. *Ye* signifying external restraints upon a person's right conduct then occupies an important place in Confucius' vision of polite society, since the proper observation of *ye* (i.e., all socially accepted manners) is supposed to be the basis for an orderly society and for harmonious human relationship in various social and political contexts.

Meanwhile, in *Analects* 7:27 one disciple says "The master [Confucius] fished with a line, not with a net. When hunting, he never shot a roosting bird" (Confucius, 1997, p.

32). In this passage we are informed that Confucius pursued a more environmentally friendly way of living, indicating that human living is only a small part of the whole universe and thus humankind should be in conformity with nature. According to Selover (2005), this reflects a Confucian sensitivity toward the things of the world, which is founded in the realization of integral relatedness or awareness of connection. Far from being a mode of self-sufficiency, then, Confucius was well aware of one's unity with the world, as well as with other persons.

D. Confucian Response to Neo-Liberalism

Up to now, the Confucian way to cultivate *yin* as a true sense of oneself and of others has been discussed, and the question now is how and to what extent Confucian humanism based on *yin* affects our critical reading of the neo-liberal market society. The first lesson from which we might learn lies in Confucian view of self which is basically collectivist and interdependent, in that it focuses on the relationship shared by the in-group members (Kim, 1994). According to Confucian ethics, the liberal-individualist conception of self as an independent entity separated from every other and from the group is faulty, because human society is an interconnected living web naturally requiring social harmony or collective welfare, which is the very condition of human existence. In

this respect, the neo-liberal view of the development of a firmly individualized self can be criticized as demarcating self and others, while Confucian love toward others to cultivate proper human relationships is considered necessary for healthy community life that signifies the authentic human way.

A second lesson is to be seen in the Confucian vision of a non-marketized society where righteousness, not profit, prevails as the leading value judgment, and social justice, not individual self-interest, becomes the main ethical principle guiding human thought and action. From this social realm of human life we have a chance to escape from the pathological ego-possessism, whose sole aim is to optimize the highest private individual benefits. In Confucianism, then, priority is always given to the 'ought' question: 'Is it righteous from the perspective of a greater whole?' For, in Confucius' own words, "[e]ven though you have only coarse grain for food, water for drink, and you[r] bent arm for a pillow, you may still be happy. Riches and honors without justice are to me as fleeting clouds" (Confucius, 1997, p. 31).

Finally, the Confucian effort to live a harmonious life with nature is worthy of note. It has often been said that humankind in this globally capitalized century is experiencing an unparalleled ecological catastrophe. And, as Porritt (2005) points out, now hardly anyone is not aware of his [sic] growing environmental problems, such as climate change

and collapsing ecosystems. Further, human beings start to accept that this is a real threat to their quality of life. It is from this value for life perspective that the neo-liberal value for money project to commodify natural resources to maximize the capitalist accumulation sounds somewhat out of fashion, and Confucian teaching for more environment-friendly ways of living can be thought of as an alternative to the capitalist, consumerist lifestyle of our age with the time fitting warning that: "The harmony between nature and mankind is distorted, and this imbalance, the damage of the nature, have an increasing tendency" (See Confucius, 1997, p. 26).

In short, Confucian ethics demands more human, social, and ecological responsibilities. It is because of this moral outlook of Confucianism that it can be considered as a counter-paradigm to the neo-liberal globalism whose egoistic concept of human nature, the utilitarian worldview, and homocentric myth are seriously challenged as not ensuring a sustainable future for humankind. Now, given this idealized end point of Confucian humanism, in the remainder of this chapter I shall focus on an educational possibility created by the Confucian virtues to struggle against the educational marketplace.

E. Educational Implications of Confucianism

As Gill (1995) aptly notes, today's human life is forever becoming more conditioned by capitalist norms and practices. A result is that profit-maximization becomes the normative goal of every aspect of life. Alongside this goes a fundamental change in the field of education, for the spread of market values throughout the world prepares the way for the commodification or commercialization of education. Against this view, however, is the Confucian tradition, whose moral values teach us not to lose sight of the human perspective both in life and education. The following suggestions emerge from Confucian humanism for the development of an alternative vision around the non-marketized concepts of education.

(1) Cultivating the sense of "other-regard" as one core condition of education

Confucian humanity of *yin* aiming to establish an individual identity in relation to others implies that education should be a humane "opportunity to have some intimacy with otherness" (Hooks, 1999, p. 116). Since Confucianism discredits the isolationism of individualism as carrying with it the danger of egoistic separation, Confucian virtues such as loyalty and reciprocity teach us to develop the proper human relationship by drawing an unselfish love toward other fellow human beings. If that is so, schools need to be

organized as caring communities where collaborative forms of instruction and a cooperative learning environment prevail and thus individual students cultivate 'an infinite attention to the other' in the process of education (Houser & Kuzmic, 2001; Readings, 1996).

(2) Reconceptualizing education as a process of pursuing humaneness

With the rise of the global economy, education becomes a form of economic investment and the educated person a human resource for economic development. Against this market imperative, however, Confucianism aims at a morally accomplished person while emphasizing education as a way to cultivate character. In this respect, Confucian education is fundamentally humanistic, the ultimate goal of which is to educate the learner to be fully human, whose primary concern is to enhance one's righteousness (*ui*) rather than one's utility. Therefore, although it would be naïve to try to replace modern education with Confucian moral teaching, Confucian commitment to an internal moral cultivation as a human-making process poses a welcome alternative to the neo-liberal market initiative in education that is characterized by human capital accumulation.

(3) Creating a 'polite' school environment by constructing morality-based curriculum

Under the neo-liberal market circumstance, students are forced to be economic animals whose individual selfishness, greed, and competition result in tearing school society apart. But, Confucian vision of a civil society based on the rules of good behaviour (*ye*) hints at a new direction of schooling, which involves a shift from the competitive and conflicting market ways to the harmonious and peaceful human way. In this sense, there is an urgent need for restoring the moral function of schooling in today's neo-liberal context while realigning the essence of curriculum to the perfection of personality which can be attained by the cultivation of good manners—kindness, courtesy, due consideration for others, and so forth.

(4) Developing school curriculum to meet the demands of ecological issues facing humankind in the twenty-first century

The Confucian question of how to create a more just and caring society includes sensitivity toward the outer world of nature, which is in sharp contrast with the anthropocentricism of the Western rational tradition. If we can gain insight into a peaceful coexistence with nature by placing humankind as an integral part of the whole universe, education in its Confucian use is to cultivate the ecological spirit in the learner by

teaching him [sic] how to mediate self-development for social harmony and ecological responsibility. To that end, schools need more ecologically sensitive curricula which contribute to a critical awareness of the internal link between humans and their environment, and the potential limits and turmoil of contemporary neo-liberal program.

(5) Deepening an understanding of curriculum as the lived experience of teacher and student

Confucius himself was a great teacher, and in the *Analects* we find Confucius showing how curriculum is created by the conversation between the teacher and the student. On one hand, the teacher is a moral person who embodies what he [sic] teaches. On the other hand, the student as the conversational partner with the teacher respects the teacher as the model of morality and ultimately identifies the teacher with the teaching (Zhang, 2003). In the Confucian sense, then, curriculum is based on the lived experience of the teacher and the student whose sharing in conversation generates lived meaning in education.

I have tried in this section to lay out a number of Confucian suggestions to help point the way for the development of a new kind of understanding of education that is free from the constraints and imperatives of the neo-liberal economic agenda.

Unquestionably, my proposals are idealistic, but it is not impractical. The obstacles range from the global stage of neo-liberalism to national strategy to commodify education for economic development. In particular, there are three main challenges facing anyone trying to implement the Confucian arrangements that have been recommended: First, the strength of the market interests and prejudices entrenched in education; Second, a global trend in support of capitalist educational measures; and finally, the administrative/legislative feasibility of creating non-marketized spaces for education. So, while the Confucian vision of education is particularly relevant today in the neo-liberal world, the question is whether education policy is well devised, locally, nationally, and internationally for solving the tension between the market orthodoxy and the eroding sense of humanity.

Epilogue

I began this study by drawing attention to the current trend of curriculum reform in Korea, which marks the influence of neo-liberal globalization on education. With the appearance of a one borderless market world, the field of curriculum is more and more determined by the economic thinking to catch up with the 'hard' reality of the twenty-first global economy. From this market authority, the present Seventh Korean National school curriculum is not exempted. Rather, the client-oriented position held by the new curriculum is the measure of the prevalence of the liberal, market elements while expressing individual difference, liberty, competition, self-autonomy, and diversity in the curriculum formation and operation. We may admire its audacious effort to reshape the established "supply-centred curriculum" from the individual learner's perspective, which is said to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, economy, and quality in education. Also, there are some advocates of the neo-liberal restructuring of school curriculum who believe that in today's world education should be an economic activity to produce a well-trained human resource or capital.

Nonetheless, when we penetrate the notion of a possessive, competitive individualism to ensure a nation's survival and development in the global marketplace,

we can hardly fail to regret that contemporary curriculum reform in Korea is mainly directed to serve the best interests of a handful of capable students, rarely exerting a wide influence over the living/learning condition of the students at large. This means that the reform limits itself to the few school elite and inclines to elevate their creative, independent brain-power, which deserves attention in the twenty-first-century knowledge- and information-based society. Of course, this is not to say that the present Korean school curriculum was only intended for the gifted minority of students. Yet, in reality, the respect for individuality in education often results in restricting 'learning,' in the richest sense of the word, to the ablest class at the expense or to the condemnation of the common mass. By the same token, of greater significance is the fact that the reform rhetoric of a purer learner-oriented curriculum that reflects each individual's different capacity and needs somewhat unexpectedly will reinforce social segregation and class divisions among students while making an artificial distinction between the more advanced and productive students and the great number of average students.

Undoubtedly, however, education is not a form of economic investment for the talented few, but a human activity considering the interconnected circumstance which one by birth relates. Nor is it probable that human essence lies in market productivity, which has a deep root in the capitalist logic of accumulation. At the core of schooling in this

light is the question of how to enhance the social ensemble which renders the meaning the cooperative, care-giving interdependent relationship between and among students. With this humanist perspective in mind, it is scarcely too much to say that the market-oriented reform which stresses the individualist value assigned to self-sufficiency and competitive achievement may indeed threaten the ethical ground of education while undermining the common living experiences of students. Furthermore, it is particularly noteworthy to know that the present neo-liberalist model of education seems to be responsible for the ecological disaster facing humankind today, because it fails to teach how to live with the other by the lack of respect for sharing a life together.

Throughout this study I have explored three different traditions focusing on their contributions to the understanding of the present Korean school curriculum. Two competing modern enlightenment projects of the West, first of all, provided me with an opportunity to see the tensions between atomistic and communitarian values implicated in the Seventh National Curriculum. Whereas the classical liberal tradition of Locke, Smith, and Mill endorsed the neo-liberal economic tendencies of the new curriculum, the social-democratic tradition of Marx and Dewey indicted the liberal-capitalist conception of education in the name of human relationship which is characterized by a high degree

of harmony and cohesion rather than mutual competition inspired by the atomistic market way.

Taken together, however, the insights of liberal-individualist and social-democratic traditions suggest the possibility for a critical re-conceptualization of both, while creating a new arena where I can discuss the Confucian point of view concerning the Seventh National Curriculum. What is particularly relevant for this dialectical process is how Confucianism has provided insights in the way the neo-liberal-individualist and social-democratic interpretations of the new curriculum obscure. As I have shown in the chapters dealing with T'oegye's neo-Confucian philosophy and classical Confucian thought, the central contribution of the East Asian Confucian tradition to curriculum thinking is its attempt to establish the proper relationships between humans, and between humans and nature, while pursuing the liberal ideal of individuality within the social context, and further situating social harmony in a radical transition to a peaceful living with the world of nature. It is in this mutual penetration of liberal-individualist and social-democratic values towards the Confucian commitment to live as humans in community within an interconnected world that I can conclude that the task of education in this era of a global economy is not that of the neo-liberal reformers to maximize economic potential, producing a competitive human capital, but rather concerned with the

essential, moral question of how to reclaim the communal value of human life and to return to the original unity with nature.

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